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- CRITIQUE OF THE ICC
- CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS  
& THE PARTY'S ROLE
- CHINESE TEXTS

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by LLM

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2. "Eastern Capitalism: A Politico-Economic Analysis"

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# CRITIQUE OF THE ICC

## GENERAL

The ICC is an important organization in the revolutionary milieu. I have been in contact with the organization for more than half-a-decade, with correspondence enough to fill a whole book, attended its 5th Congress last year as an observer, and have been distributing its press for more than 2 years. It is, therefore, sad to see it degenerating so rapidly over the past several years.

It is not my intention to analyse the objective causes, both immediate and long-term, of the ICC's degeneration. For the sake of simplicity, I shall restrict myself entirely to analysing the degeneration itself. As the programmatic work of communists have a certain degree of autonomy from the immediate twists & turns of the class struggle, which, of course, is not to say that communist theory is not grounded concretely in nothing but the historic struggle of the proletariat, such a simplification is justifiable. Furthermore, although programmatic issues are often only posed by objective developments of the class struggle (one only has to recall how Marx's view of the transitional state changed), their theoretical status (soundness, falsity) must ultimately be determined theoretically. (Even when a theory once thought correct is thrown into doubt or shown to be inadequate by the practice of the class struggle, its refutation, modification or replacement is done by theory.) (1)

The ICC's degeneration is both organizational and theoretical. (It will be seen that this degeneration is not a recent phenomenon, only that it has accelerated in the last few years.) Organizational questions are not directly programmatic, but since the programmatic leadership of communists (for my view on the party's role, see my correspondence with the CBG also in this issue) is only exercised through communist organizations, they are of equal importance. Theoretical questions may or may not be programmatic, but since the same methodology inevitably underlies both types of theoretical questions, weakness displayed in one type is often also displayed in the other.

Finally, I make no apology for making an 'individual' critique of the ICC (whenever referring to the ICC unqualified, I am referring to its 'majority', which, as will be seen below, often means its central organs alone). In a recent



letter to me (see below), the ICC, running out of arguments, deliberately makes the implication that my comments, being 'individual', are worthless. Most of Marx's, Engels', Lenin's, to mention only them, were published as 'individual' works, even though they were members of communist organizations. It is a pathological sign of the revolutionary milieu, that on non-programmatic issues, organizations should have organizational positions, and not positions of different tendencies (orientations). I shall have more to say about this later.

## ORGANIZATIONAL DEGENERATION

This section contains the following text and a postscript to it.

# THE MONOLITHISM OF THE ICC

Forward: There have, ever since its foundation, been monolithic tendencies (the meaning of monolithism is defined in this text itself) operating within the ICC. These tendencies have grown many times stronger in the last several years. Ironically, the ICC's so-called attempt to draw lessons from its crisis three years ago did the very opposite, by codifying these tendencies. If uncorrected, they will destroy that organization as a revolutionary vanguard. It may, and in all likelihood will, survive as an organization, but not as a revolutionary vanguard. This text is based upon the text "Is The ICC Tending Towards Monolithism?" published in the Communist Bulletin no. 5(\*) which was written immediately after an extended visit to Europe last year, during which I discussed with the major left-communist fractions as well as attended the ICC's 5th Congress. In the "Forward" to that text, I criticized the forerunners of the CBG for splitting from the ICC on a non-programmatic basis, ie, on the question of monolithism. In a letter subsequent to that text, the CBG expressed disagreement over my criticism, saying that organizational questions, though not directly programmatic, are intimately tied to the exercise of the exercise of the political leadership of revolutionaries, and therefore provide sufficient grounds for a split. I am convinced by this view (see "General" above) and hereby withdraw my criticism as unsound.

In the "Forward" I also said: "aside from Programma [which I consider to be very much a leftist group], the ICC is the only group with experience in international centralization. Its experience in this respect, both its

\* Considerably rewritten. For my view on the origins of the CBG & the Tendency, see the Postscript as well as point 1. under "The ICC's Letter (Circa July, 1984)", infra. The political issues mentioned in the latter are examined in the present text.

acquisitions and failings, should therefore be examined by the whole milieu, and not just shoved aside as 'its own business'." (p.13) I repeat this here, and will repeat it for the umpteenth time if necessary, because this is exactly how the milieu generally has taken the whole matter, namely, as the ICC's 'own business'. Witness how, for example, the CWO conceive of the CBG's efforts at grappling with the organizational problems revealed by the ICC's crisis: "we feel that the CB no.4 is a move away from the political introversion that had previously characterized your activity." (Letter of 24.9.83 to the CBG, the CB no.5, p.29) (2) In time we should all be glad that we are already examining these problems, unlike the Russian left-communists and decists, who examined similar questions at a time when circumstances were outstripping them.

The monolithic tendencies of the ICC are not new phenomena.(3)Some of them have always been present, the crisis served only to bring them to a head. Now, for example, did Luxemburg's pseudo-crisis theory become the ICC's so-called organizational theory? Simply because the group's leading members were Luxemburgists. Members of the ICC have personally confirmed to me that there never was any serious discussion held within the group on crisis theory. The case of the debate on the transitional state is also instructive. (This being the only time that minority texts have surfaced in the ICC's press--the minority text on the weak link theory question in IR 37 represents a small victory for oppositional forces inside the organization, which pressed for the respect for minority rights during the 5th Congress, one concrete demand being the publication of internal texts in the press.) (4) While the debate was still going on, IR 11 published a text opposing what is now the official ICC view, which was followed by.... "The 'ICC's' Reply"! (Though the reply was signed.) On the other hand, MC's text in IR 15, the next published contribution to the debate, of course, did not have any 'ICC's' reply attached to it--it supports the present official position.

In criticizing the ICC, the CBG and other splitters still engaged in revolutionary work, must also make a self-criticism of their past. They were partly responsible for allowing deep-seated monolithic tendencies such as the above to go or remain (the Aberdonians joined the ICC after IR 11) unchallenged and uncorrected. The Aberdonians support the falling rate of profit theory, while in the ICC, had they written texts criticizing Luxemburg's pseudo-theory, or texts analysing the development of the crisis based upon the falling rate of profit theory for publication? If not, why not? If they had, why did they allow

their suppression? Why did they not press for a group-wide debate on crisis theory? Why did the seceders allow IR 11's anomaly to remain uncorrected publically, or had they challenged it at all even internally? Had they challenged the monolithic practice of having organizational positions on non-programmatic questions before it became too late, ie, before the situation became so bad that a split was unavoidable?(5)

I do not bring these up just for the sake of criticism. An organization is what its members make it to be in their practice, and not an abstract form. If revolutionaries do not, both internally and externally, criticize views held by other members of the same group with which they disagree, they are failing in their duty as revolutionaries, as the class's political vanguard, for their supreme allegiance, in that capacity, is to the communist program (non-programmatic issues are, nevertheless, related to the defence of the program), and not to any majority. (This is a different matter from observing discipline on organizational matters--see below.) If they do not challenge, both internally and externally, monolithic tendencies such as the above, they are allowing these tendencies to sterilize them as revolutionaries; in both cases, in their own practice, they contribute to the group's degeneration as a revolutionary vanguard.

The above is not just to emphasize that the seceders must not simply 'wash their hands' (I'm not suggesting they are doing this) after seceding. For we see the important point that it is in the very process in which revolutionaries vigorously assume their role as revolutionaries that a revolutionary organization is built. (I am, certainly, saying this with a particular view of class consciousness and the role of revolutionaries in mind. I will deal with this in a moment. Suffice to say for the moment that unless one holds the councilist or 'divine' leadership views, what is said here generally applies.) There is no 'ideal' revolutionary organization, fixed and immutable. New organizational problems will always arise. These problems can only be overcome in a process in which the organization is constantly being built and rebuilt, by revolutionaries tirelessly, firmly and insistently assuming their role and duty and act in accordance with what is required to be able to do so. Only in this way will a revolutionary organization, built in this very process, be in line with its aim and role. It is, therefore, futile to look for some magical formula. For example, the idea that monolithism can be averted by rotating leadership responsibilities is as useless as a comb to a Buddhist monk. If revolutionaries do not act as required by their role and duty, monolithism can

flourish just as easily, as we find in many libertarian/anarchist groups. If revolutionaries do act as required by their role and duty, monolithism will not be able to flourish even when the same people are in the central organs for a long time. (On the other hand, rotational leadership serves to weaken an organization politically--revolutionaries have a duty to seek to constantly 'upgrade' themselves, to seek to replace current leaders.) There are no blueprints of how to build a revolutionary organization, but only one yardstick: any practice which obstructs or prevents revolutionaries from playing their role, ie, which obstructs or prevents the organization from playing its role as a revolutionary organization, in concrete terms, which obstructs or prevents contending views from gaining the widest possible 'hearing' in the class or even from reaching the class at all, thereby obstructing or preventing them from gaining the widest possible debate in the class, or even from being debated by the class at all, is inconsistent with the very aim and role of revolutionary organizations. No-one, except some 'divine saviours', has the right to decide FOR THE CLASS what VIEWS on particular non-programmatic issues it should learn & debate about, as well as when it should do so. (6)

Contending views held by revolutionaries are views of the class. Whatever one may think about a certain view on a non-programmatic issue, to think that one, as a member with leadership responsibilities, has the right to keep it from the class, or to decide the 'opportune' moment to let the class know about it, is to regard oneself as the class's 'divine saviour', 'divinely' endowed with the right to 'save' the class from 'contamination' or from learning about something at an 'inopportune' moment. (This point & its relationship with centralism is developed in detail in the text.)

This simple point, that organizational questions are tied directly to the role and aim of revolutionaries, and therefore, of revolutionary groups, which the CBC already pointed out a long time ago--"What we've tried to do...is situate the questions of monolithism, centralism and the nature of the Party's leading role..." (the Bulletin no.2, p.46)--seems to have gone unrecognized. This is all the more amazing as we have the stark, negative experience of the Bolsheviks as evidence.

We should be proud, to quote one of the best examples, of the Russian left-communists who, knowing what centralism does and does not mean, refused to let their views get buried away from the class in internal party discussions, and fought for these views outside, ie, among the workers, as well as inside the party. When they had a majority in the Petrograd and Moscow party

organizations, they published the daily (in Petrograd) and the journal (in Moscow), both named Kommunist, as official organs of these local party organizations, giving their oppositional views on the Brest-Litovsk treaty and on the appointment of so-called 'soviet commissars' invested with 'dictatorial powers' to enterprises and on other economic matters access to the class. (7) How far removed this is from the practice of the ICC (to name just it), which claims to have learned from the Bolsheviks' degeneration!: "The fact for example that 50 or 80% of the comrades within one territorial section may disagree with a certain position of the whole organization decided on at an international congress, does not mean that we are free to dispose of that position at our intervention. The central organs of that section are obliged to express that position." (WR Internal Bulletin no. 53) It is well-known what happened to the two Kommunist's when bolsheviks with the same view of so-called centralism as the ICC's gained majorities in the Petrograd and Moscow party organizations: both were immediately suppressed. (The last number of Kommunist (Moscow) was published as a private journal.) The ICC's view of so-called centralism is exactly that held by the bolshevik majority: Lenin's 'divine' texts such as "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government", "'Left-Wing' Childishness & the Petty-Bourgeois Mentality" etc were all carried by Pravda (on April 28, 1918 for the former and May 9, 10 & 11, 1918 for the latter), while workers who had not read Kommunist (Moscow) might have difficulty figuring out who Lenin was arguing with, if he had not been kind enough to have mentioned Bukharin, Ossinsky etc in his texts. Our only regret is the left-communists did not fight harder, their views were unable to gain a wider audience in the class to be debated by it. Who had the more correct view on the appointed 'soviet commissars' whom Lenin invested with a so-called working class 'mandate', etc, the 'divine saviours' of the bolshevik majority or the left-communists? (Though this is secondary.) Were Ossinsky to hold the ICC's view of so-called centralism, he would not have proposed the motion on industrial administration (enterprises to be run by boards two-thirds elected by workers and not by the so-called 'soviet commissars') which opposed Lenin's, ie, the bolshevik majority's view, at the May/June, 1918 Congress of Regional Economic Councils. Ie, he would not have ignored the so-called centralist view that communists belonging to the same group have to "speak with one voice" (the ICC), ie, put forward only one view on non-programmatic issues (industrial administration was then non-programmatic) to the class. He would not, instead, have fought the battle, which every revolutionary worthy of the name should have undertaken to the utmost, inside the

state, ie, among the workers, in the class, by holding the banner of the left-communist views high for the class to debate them. Were Ossinsky to hold that view, he would have first enquired with the 'divine saviours' of the Bolshevik majority whether the left-communist views would 'contaminate' the class (the suppression of these views earlier shows that he would probably be making a bloody fool of himself to do so), and if the central organs deemed that they indeed would. Ossinsky would have kept his mouth shut, let the class be 'saved' by the 'divine' majority's view, which it alone could do, exactly the way the ICC 'revolutionary' would've 'intervened in the class'.

Are more examples needed to bring this very simple point home? (The weighty CBG text "Another Look At the Question Of Organization" in the B no.2 contains other parallels between the bolsheviks and the current ICC: despite giving Lenin & the organizational Leninists a lot more credit that they deserve, this text contains some important observations.)

It is, of course, possible that one regards the class as an unconscious mass of manipulatable objects, whose salvation lies in being led by the nose by whichever view that happens to command a majority in the party. In such a case, it is, obviously, quite useless to inform the class of the internal 'divine' debates of their 'saviours'. But one is still troubled by the fact that history is full of examples in which the majority is wrong. Even so, as an unconscious mass of manipulatable objects, the class is, of course, unable to do anything even when informed of the minority view(s). The only hope, therefore, is that the majority is right the next time. Let's pray!

This brings us back to our starting point, namely, that only when revolutionaries act as revolutionaries can they, in their own practice be able to build an organization that is consistent with its role and aim. This text, therefore, does not seek to provide a magical recipe for building the 'ideal' organization. It only seeks to show that the negative experience of the ICC has revealed a number of practices which strangle revolutionary practice itself. It is not simply a matter of respecting minority rights, which was the focus of oppositional views expressed during the ICC's 5th Congress. As the text shows, it involves the question of groups having so-called organizational positions on non-programmatic issues, the role of central organs, the question of tendencies, etc. I do not know the procedures oppositional texts have to go through to surface in the ICC's press. (I do know that the ICC's statues give them as a category (& not each text, whether of the majority or minority view, considered individually on its own merit) no publication rights.) Certainly ICC members are in a position to draw conclusions con-



cerning these procedures and let the class learn from any positive or negative experience. Ditto for other organizational questions not covered in the present text. Ditto for other organizations.

\* \* \*

During my trip to Europe last summer, I held extensive discussions with the ICC (both central organ members and comrades from a number of sections) and the CBG on the question of organization. My attention to the question was drawn even before I learned about the existence of the Bulletin (later the CB). In a letter of 27.8.82 to the ICC, I wrote: "I have never come across any article that's being stated as expressing a minority opinion or any that criticize other articles of the same organization in your press...it is politically important that...critique and anti-critique be 'disclosed' to the whole milieu let me now add: to the class as a whole in the press." That comment was inaccurate for I forgot about the debate on the transitional state. But on review, that solitary (see note 4) exception proves the rule. Before the text "Report on the Structure and Functioning of the Revolutionary Organization" was published in IR 33, which, as I learned from an ICC comrade in summer 1982, originally was not to be publically published, I had requested and received a copy. On examination, I found the text containing some disturbing stipulations. When I received the first four copies of the B/the CB, aside from finally getting both sides of the picture on the Chenier affair (though still very much incomplete), I found my suspicions very much substantiated. For that reason, I made discussion on the question of organization a focus in Europe. My discussions convinced me that my suspicions were fully borne out, that there is a considerable amount of truth in the CBG's allegation of monolithism against the ICC. These allegations, in fact, the ICC confirmed in its very own words.

#### Non-programmatic Theoretical Questions, Conjunctural Analysis, Minority Rights, Tendencies

Should an organization take an organizational position on non-programmatic theoretical questions such as crisis theory, the state in the period of transition? (Note: these issues are to be distinguished from conjunctural analyses, which are also non-programmatic, with which I deal below.) Before answering the question, it must be pointed out that some regard the second question given as example above as a class line, ie, as programmatic. My view is that the position on this issue originating from Internationalisme is a justified attempt, though totally mistaken, to draw lessons from

the Russian Revolution; for this reason, the question can remain 'open' today (very soon--at the latest, by the time the period of dual power commences in one or several countries--it will become programmatic). Returning to the above question, it is obviously connected with whether or not minorities are allowed to defend their positions both inside the group and outside in the class as a whole in public meetings, the press, etc.

The ICC told me that members of minorities including those belonging to central organs, are free and given the opportunity to do so (a point on which more below). But in such a case, the organization surely is not "speaking with one voice". Furthermore, what purposes does it serve for it to take an organizational position on such issues at all, if minorities have the above rights? I have discussed this with quite a few ICC comrades and here are some of their answers:

\* By taking an organizational position, it shows that the group is not just an addition of individuals.

My answer: positions on any question are not individual positions; on any question, there are not 1,001 positions, but only several orientations. Moreover, if the former were the case, by taking an organizational position, the group does not in any way do away with the fact that it is an addition of individuals.

\* An organization cannot discuss all questions at all times.

My answer: True. But an organization can certainly call a temporary halt to any discussion without having to take a position on it.

\* It serves to 'synthesize' a debate at a certain stage, so that when discussion is resumed, it is not necessary to start from the beginning again. It also helps the debate in the milieu.

My answer: What is meant by to 'synthesize'? (Reply: to draw the agreements and disagreements of the contending viewpoints.) For every theoretical question, if there are two or more positions, and if one is a Marxist position, then the others must inevitably be bourgeois. Take crisis theory, for example: in a 'synthesis', the agreement would be that capitalism is based upon value production or the exploitation of wage labour, the disagreement would be the realisation of the part of the surplus value to be capitalized. The agreement, however, is no agreement resulting from the debate in question at all, for it is the very



starting point of Marxist theory. As to the disagreement, it cannot be 'synthesized' precisely because one theory (Luxemburg's) stays on the market level (and is therefore bourgeois empiricist) while the other (the falling rate of profit) goes to analyse the underlying cause of overproduction.

Or take the question of the state in the transitional period. In a 'synthesis', the agreement would be the necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the role of the workers' councils, while the disagreement would be on the nature of the state. Again, the agreement is not any agreement (resulting from the debate on the transitional state) for it is programmatic. The disagreement, again, cannot be 'synthesized' precisely because one theory (the state is 'conservative by nature') departs from the survival needs of society-in-abstract (the very starting point of bourgeois, professional sociology) while the other analyses the state in terms of specific historical classes. The point is, therefore, that making a resolution at a congress on an 'open' theoretical question merely shows that at a particular point in time, a majority of a group supports one position instead of another or others. Reading the ICC's State pamphlet, one gets to know all the issues involved, without having to read the draft resolution, the draft counter-resolution, and the resolution adopted. Reading the resolution itself, it is crystal clear that it does not 'synthesize' the two opposing positions, but merely registers the majority's. (8)

\* But surely an organization cannot remain without a position on any question?

My answer: Why not, if it is not programmatic, and if 'minorities' (in quotes because we envisage a group with no so-called organizational positions on non-programmatic issues) are free and given the opportunity to defend their positions?

In my discussions with the ICC, those who defend the necessity of organizational positions on non-programmatic theoretical issues did not come up with one single purpose that would have been served by it. I stand to be convinced if someone can come up with a convincing argument.

Contrary to what some people think, if members of communist organizations behave as responsible communists, and if the organizations themselves possess the political maturity to handle non-programmatic divergencies, 'open' theoretical questions will not cause splits.

They are non-programmatic and have little bearing on the organization's intervention (on this latter point, see below). Organizations should, of course, attempt to 'thrash out' divergencies of this kind, but this cannot be done by making a resolution.

Similarly, concerning conjunctural analyses, if minorities are free and given the opportunity to defend their positions, I cannot see any purpose served by taking organizational positions, which need to be defended (by the group 'as a whole'?) both against the minorities and other groups, such as the Left in Opposition, etc. Does that mean I don't see any need for an organization taking up positions on events? Certainly not. Take an example: in a congress, the group will pass a resolution on the international situation (that any lack of unanimity should prevent its passage is ridiculous) which inevitably contains an analysis of the current situation. That is necessary. But the point is whether this analysis then serves as the basis for "the whole life of the organization in the ensuing period"? ("Report on the Structure..."--referred to as the "Report" as from this point--IR 33, p.21) Firstly, since minorities have the abovementioned rights, there's no question that it serves the group in such a way, unless there is unanimity. (But, as will be seen the rights the ICC give to minorities are as generous as the rights capitalists give to workers.) Secondly, conjunctural analyses are no more than analyses, what if events "in the ensuing period" subsequently cast doubt on them? Should the central organs (including the minority members in the central organs?) continue to defend them? And should "the whole life of the organization" (including the minorities?) continue to defend them?

But what's the point of passing such a resolution at a congress, then, one may ask? Well, passing such a resolution isn't to produce a dogma, nor to allow only one analysis to dominate "the whole life of the organization in the ensuing period". But surely conjunctural analyses have an impact on a group's intervention, and if a group is allowed to defend divergent analyses, would it not lead to organizational paralysis? The answer to the first part of the question is 'yes' and 'no' and to the second is 'no'. The ICC has a particular analysis of the Falklands war, but should that affect its intervention in calling on British and Argentinian workers and soldiers to sabotage the war efforts and fraternize, though it was, according to the ICC, a phoney war? On the other hand, an analysis of an upsurge of the class struggle will certainly lead a group to em-

phasize certain aspects of its intervention. This leads to the second part of the above question. Here we must distinguish between questions of analyses and questions of organizational practice. To continue with the above example, if at a particular conjuncture, a 'majority' (in quotes for the same reason as above) of an organization hold an analysis of upsurging class struggle while a 'minority' hold a different analysis, what happens? On the level of organizational practice, if the 'upsurge' thesis commands a 'majority' (either in the whole group or in the central organs depending on the situation), the thesis will be translated into decisions concerning intervention, for eg, increased leafletting, etc. Whatever position one holds on the conjuncture, these decisions are binding on all members. But, on the other hand, this does not mean that members holding a 'minority' thesis will not be allowed to defend their analysis, both internally within the group and externally in the class as a whole, that the group does not give every thesis, both 'majority' and 'minority', as much access to the class as a whole as possible. (9)

Let's see how the ICC's "Report", which professedly has synthesized the lessons to be drawn from the group's crisis, deals with the question of taking an organizational position, and after that, the practices stipulated. "Centralism is not an optional or abstract principle.. It expresses the fact that it is one and the same organization which takes positions /on what kind of issues ?/ and acts within the class...In the face of the working class you cannot have political positions /ditto/ or conceptions of intervention which are particular to this or that territorial or local section...We must absolutely reject the conception according to which this or that part of the organization can adopt, in front of the organization or of the working class, the position /ditto/ or attitudes which it thinks correct instead of those of the organization which it thinks incorrect. /The left-communists turn in their grave./ This is because:

-...

-such a conception leads a part of the organization to arbitrarily impose its own position /ditto/ on the whole organization with regard to this or that aspect of its work (local or specific)." (ibid. p22)

Nowhere in this formulation is a distinction made between programmatic and non-programmatic issues. (The "Report" does come to this later as we shall see immediately afterwards.) It is certainly true that in

front of the working class we cannot have programs which "are particular to this or that territorial or local section." For example, a Chinese section of the world party cannot have a program which seeks to "win the battle of democracy" first before pushing forward for the socialist revolution. According to the "Report", divergent positions on non-programmatic issues seem to arise for 'territorial or local' reasons. Thus it was possible for communists in country 'A', for 'local or specific' reasons, to regard Luxemburg's pseudo-crisis theory as correct, while for the same reasons, for communists in country 'B' to regard the falling rate of profit theory as correct. (Cf. the empiricism of the ICC's so-called critique of the theory of the weak link). Or possible for communists in France for 'local or specific' reasons, to put forward a left-in-power analysis, while for the same reasons, for communists in the UK to put forward a left-in-opposition analysis, and for communists in China (in which country the left can only be in opposition) to put forward a left-in-clandest..wait a minute, there is no systematic underground force with which the working class can identify as in some S. American countries, those underground are mostly petty-bourgeois intellectuals with no working class following...in that case, to put forward a left-in-itself analysis. It was as though, for 'local or specific' reasons, communists in country 'D' see the state as 'conservative by nature', communists in country 'E' see the opposite.

Such is the narrow vision with which the "Report" sees (no allegory intended here) divergent positions on non-programmatic questions. Since it is obvious that different territorial sections must have the same program, since the "Report" does not distinguish between programmatic and non-programmatic issues, it therefore 'follows' that the organization must only defend one position in front of the working class on all questions, including non-programmatic ones, otherwise, it 'would be' falling into parochialism, 'would be' letting the parts "arbitrarily impose [their] own position on the whole organization."

The narrow vision with which the "Report" sees divergent positions is not limited to the above. A tendency "emerges around differences of orientation on circumstantial questions". ( ibid. pp. 23/4) One wonders whether non-programmatic theoretical questions such as imperialism, the fact that feudal landownership in China, which existed side by side with extensive slavery for several hundred years, was succeeded by a mode of production based upon free landownership (a development

markedly different from Europe's), etc. have any place in the "Report"'s framework.(10) "As such, a tendency is generally destined to be reabsorbed once a question has become sufficiently clear for the whole organization to put forward a single analysis either as a result of discussion, or as the result of new elements which confirm one view and refute the other." ( ibid. p.23, emphasis mine) From my discussions with comrades from various sections of the ICC, I can assure the reader that, despite "putting forward a single analysis" on the bourgeoisie's present strategy, the bourgeoisie's consciousness, etc., these questions are far from "sufficiently clear for the whole organization"--many comrades openly told me they reject the "single analysis" being put forward. But that's an aside.

What's instructive is this: according to the "Report", "as a result of discussion, or as the result of new elements which confirm one view and refute the other", it is always ("destined"--though qualified by "generally", no other possibility is mentioned) possible for comrades to come to a "single" conjunctural analysis. What about other possibilities: discussion failing to homogenize views; new elements neither confirm one view nor refute the others; new elements refute all views; new elements, ie, new conjunctures neither confirm nor refute any view but give rise to new and contending views; etc.etc.? (11)

These holes in the "Report" are there simply because the whole purpose of the "Report" is to defend one point: what the ICC sees as the 'need' for an organization to 'speak with one voice', ie, to 'put forward a single analysis' on all questions to the class. Firstly, the nature of the questions involved is ignored to cook up the lie that centralism 'requires' the organization to 'speak with one voice'. Secondly, when conjunctural analyses are examined on their own, the whole organization is said to be "destined to put forward a single analysis." Even were comrades finally to come to hold a single analysis of a particular conjuncture, it does not follow that before they do so, the organization should 'speak with one, ie, the majority's voice'. Which brings us to the question the the ICC's actual practice.

In my discussion with the ICC, I was reassured several times that minorities have the 'right' and opportunity to defend their positions publically, and this applies to members of the central organs as well. The "Report" says: "The majority...must not abuse the fact that its position /the ICC must, if only unconsciously, be referring to non-programmatic issues here/ has become



the position of the organization and annihilate debate...for example, by compelling members of the minority to be spokesman for positions they don't adhere to." (ibid. p.23) The way in which the point is put--members of the minority not to be compelled to be spokesman for the majority's position, instead of should have the right, freedom and opportunity to defend their views--becomes intelligible as soon as we put it in context: "To the extent that the debates going on in the organization generally concern the whole proletariat they should be expressed publically while respecting the following conditions:

--..that they have matured sufficiently for their publication to be a real contribution to the developments of class consciousness;

--it's the organization as a whole which decides on and carries out the publication of such contributions, basing such decisions on criteria which apply to any other article in the press: whether it is clearly written, whether it's of interest to the working class as a whole, etc...there is no formal 'right' of anyone...(individual or tendency) to have a text published if the responsible organs don't feel that it is useful or opportune." (ibid. p.23, emphasis mine)

Make no mistake here. The focus of the "Report" is not to say that no individual has any right to have his text published, with which no-one would disagree. The focus is to say that minority texts as a whole can be suppressed if deemed by the 'responsible organs' not to be 'useful', 'a real contribution to the developments of class consciousness' or 'of interest' to the class. Absurdity of the infinite degree, that's what it is: the "Report" is saying a priori that a particular category of texts, minority texts, as a whole, can be so deemed. But that in a moment. There is a Chinese saying: "There are not 300 taels of silver buried in the ground here" (fable has it that once upon a time, a man with 300 taels of silver buried them in the ground, fearing theft/robbery; still unsatisfied that someone might suspect there was that amount of silver buried there, he stuck a board on the spot with the above saying written on it, to 'preclude' suspicion.) Were the "Report"'s focus not to justify suppression of minority texts, why need to mention 'tendency' specifically? Why does it not also mention neither do texts supporting majority views carry the right of automatic publication? Surely, every text, regarded individually, is accessed on the same criteria, regardless of its

position?

According to the "Report", minority texts as a whole can be suppressed, and the justification is they may not be 'useful' or 'of interest' to the working class. But, on a certain question, both majority and minority texts are talking about the same question, which means that if the majority position is 'useful' or 'of interest' to the class as a whole, by the same token, the minority position(s) must also be 'useful' and 'of interest' to the class as a whole.

Let's call an egg an egg and don't hide behind a facade of formulations the only purpose of which is to mislead. What the "Report" really wants to say is simply this: that as 'divine saviours of the working class', the majority, through the 'responsible organs' (in practice, in the ICC only members of the majority get represented in the central organs) have the 'divine right' to decide FOR THE CLASS what VIEWS on particular questions are 'useful' or 'of interest' to it, with which it should be spoon-fed, as well as the 'opportune' moment to do so. Not only the class generally, but also that part of it which is the rest of the milieu, are regarded as an unconscious mass of manipulatable objects, to be nurtured by the 'divine saviours', who decide for them with what views on particular questions to be duck-fed, and the 'opportune' moment to do so. Members of the minority fare no better. They are similarly regarded as ignorant or at least less aware of what views are 'useful' or 'of interest' to the class, ie, of what views can alone 'save' the class and nurture the rest of the milieu. (A hierarchy of deities?)

The above concerns publications. How, according to the "Report", should comrades holding minority positions behave at public meetings, in their intervention in the class? Simple. Since, on the one hand, our 'vigorously alive' organization does not compel them to defend the majority view, and, on the other hand, as 'lesser deities' they are not 'divinely ordained' to decide whether their views can 'save' the class, or, if the 'divine saviours' in the 'responsible organs' have decided that they can, whether it is the 'opportune' moment to do so, the only course of action open is none other than: keep their mouths shut! (12)

'Lesser deities', at least, are not compelled to defend positions they don't adhere to. But, as we have seen, WR Internal Bulletin no. 53 states that central organs "are obliged to express [the majority's] posit-

ion." Say we had an ICC section in China, none of those in the central organs defends the ICC's current majority view of state-capitalism. According to WR's above Internal Bulletin, they would still have to defend it at public meetings, in unsigned texts (presumably, I say 'presumably' because, as we will see later, this may not be true, central organ members write signed texts as individual militants, and not as central organ members, they should therefore be able to, if the international central organs deem the minority views to be capable of 'saving' the class and the moment is 'opportune', defend their views in signed texts), etc. Even the wretched so-called respect for minority rights as currently exists in the ICC disappears altogether. In practice, as I was told, the ICC has found an ingenious solution to the problem: members belonging to the majority in the international central organs would, in such cases, write the necessary texts! (I now begin to appreciate the comment made by an ex-ICC member that the ICC is just a publishing house for the international central organs.) But what's the remedy in the case of public meetings, discussion with contacts, intervention in the class, etc.? Certainly no problem is insolvable for our 'divine saviours'. (I recall this question was raised during the 5th Congress, but, unfortunately cannot recall the content of any discussion that might have ensued.)

We have seen (footnote 10) that, according to the "Report", to conceive tendencies as "constituted...around points of theoretical analysis...leads to a weakening of the organization and a dispersal of militant energies." That is not all. The "Report"'s mighty conception, which 'can' change objective facts, also 'divinely decrees' that tendencies are "destined to be reabsorbed" into the organization. (Does the reader now understand why no other possibility is mentioned--how can facts not occur as willed by God's design?) According to the "Report", then, minorities serve to weaken the organization, for like prodigal sons, they have to be re-absorbed into the organization after the period during which they were only really members in name. True, the "Report" says at another point: "while the existence of divergencies within the organization is a sign that it is alive".(ibid., p.23) But, in addition to the above, how are we to understand what the ICC statutes say about organized divergencies: "a manifestation--either of the immaturity of the Current,--or of a tendency towards degeneration"? (quoted in the Bulletin no.2, p.37) No, comrades, tendencies are always part



of the organization, requiring no "destined reabsorption"! They do not "weaken" the organization, nor "disperse militant energies". They are part and parcel of the proletariat's struggle itself. By suppressing tendencies the way you do, as we have shown so far and as we will further show below, you are suppressing the proletariat's struggle itself.

### The Role of the Central Organs

The ICC says the central organs have the responsibility

"to take positions whenever necessary, on the basis of orientations defined by the Congress; taking up positions on internal debates when necessary"

and

"the positions and decisions of the central organs always take precedence over those of other parts of the organization taken separately." (ibid.p.21)

I have already dealt with the point "on the basis of orientations defined by the Congress". Should central organs be allowed to take positions on 'open' theoretical questions and conjunctural analyses? In the former case, if the organization itself does not take a position, the question becomes non-existent for the central organs. In the latter case, certainly the central organs should. If again there is to be no one organization position, the position taken by the central organs in response to particular events will only be a matter of 'majority'/'minority' (ditto) within the central organs at particular conjunctures. The question is should the position so taken then become the organization's position, to be defended against the group's own dissenting opinions (there may well be a majority of members rejecting the position taken by the central organs), and other groups' criticism? Only 'divine saviours' will answer 'yes'. Take an example, the central organs decide to publish a leaflet on a certain event. It discusses the event and an analysis taken (on top of defending the basic class lines such as revolutionary defeatism in the case of a war) which will be contained in the leaflet. But, for the reasons already discussed, neither should this analysis be binding on the central organs, nor on the group as a whole. After the publication of the leaflet, the analysis, if members feel necessary, should be debated as just one analysis and not the group's, not only internally, but also publicly.

Not so with the ICC. Positions taken by central organs on non-programmatic issues (both conjunctural analyses and theoretical questions) automatically become the so-called organizational position. If members disagree with the position, they are free to discuss it. But, according to the ICC statutes, as I learned from one 'divine saviour', dissension can only first be expressed internally. Whether or not it gets public, and if it does, the 'opportune' moment to do so, are, needless to say, the prerogatives of the 'divine saviours' of the working class in the central organs.

In the ICC, there is a practice that the central organs preface a contribution in the Internal Bulletin with a comment on its theoretical validity. Though the frequency of this cannot be ascertained, the practice is admitted by the ICC. What's wrong with this, says the ICC? Isn't it (the preface) also a contribution to the debate? Members of central organs surely also contribute to internal debates, but should they do so as members of the organization or as central organ members? For central organ members to preface any discussion with comments on its validity is tantamount to regarding itself as a theoretical teacher. The central organs do not have any theoretical 'precedence over' the rest of the organization in the sense of theoretical authority, though because of its very mandate, it surely possess prerogatives unavailable to other parts of the group. What is the purpose of central organs taking up a position as the central organs in internal debates? I cannot see any, if not to impose theoretical authority. For people who regard themselves as 'divine saviours of the class', as 'nursery dieticians' of the rest of the milieu, who regard other members of the group as ignorant of the interest of the class, the picture is certainly different.

Am I reducing the role of the central organs to that of a coordinator? No. As said, central organs take up positions in conjunctural analysis when necessary. They make political decisions for the group between congresses, such as initiating conferences with other groups. They decide a considerable portion of the topics to be discussed, events to be analysed, etc. in the press (but not positions/analyses on/of these topics/events to be debated by the class as a whole, nor when it does so). Etc., etc. These prerogatives give the central organs tremendous influence on the direction taken by the organization. But we must not confuse political leadership with theoretical authority, or regard analysis taken by central organs at a particular conjuncture as serving the basis for the 'whole life of the organization', or regard the mandate given to the central organs

as 'heavenly' or 'divine'.

The "Report" says: "it is more opportune if, within the International central organ, there is a strong proportion of militants who, at the Congress, pronounce themselves in favour of its decisions and orientations" (ibid. p.22) If it is not clear immediately that this is merely a blatant apology for the fact that in the ICC, in practice, only the majority get represented in the international central organs, the "Report" itself tells us that a little later. "Neither does this mean that there must be a principle of representation---of minority positions within the central organ. This is a typical practice of bourgeois parties... To have a stable, permanent, and proportional representation of the different positions, which appeared on the various points on the agenda of a Congress would thus be to ignore the fact that the members of central organs:---can perfectly easily change their personal positions (in one direction or another) with the evolution of the debate." (ibid.) Clever, isn't it? On the one hand, because "members of central organs can perfectly easily change their personal positions", therefore, to have minorities represented is "a typical practice of bourgeois parties", on the other hand, "it is more opportune" to have "a strong proportion of militants who, at the Congress, pronounce themselves in favour of" the decisions and orientations of the Congress! In the one case, militants can change positions, in the other, they won't!

#### "Secret" and "Bilateral" Correspondence, Meetings, etc.

The ICC rejects "secret" and "bilateral" correspondence between members (point 9, op. cit.) Here 'bilateral' and 'secret' go together as though they had an intrinsic relationship. During the second Congress of the RSDLP, Lenin and the Iskraites around him held private meetings to clarify their own positions, the Mensheviks, how best to argue their case, etc. These meetings were certainly 'bilateral' though not 'secret'. What's wrong with them? Nothing says the ICC except that they should have been open to all members of the RSDLP, so that the Mensheviks could contribute to the clarification. That was why the ICC insisted that meetings of the "tendency" be open to all members. But what's the purpose of such meetings in the first place? Precisely for members with similar views on certain questions (in a healthy group, tendencies should be issue-oriented, ie, around one or two questions, not a series) to clarify to themselves their positions, etc. If they should be open to all members, why then have the meetings in the first place? Why don't they just discuss the issues in section meet-

ings? Further, I don't see any objection to the circulation of 'bilateral' texts. It certainly should be up to the participants to decide if these texts have sufficiently clarified matters to be 'returned' to the organization as contributions to its debates. There may, in some cases, even be nothing to be 'returned' to the organization as for example when the participants after some discussion become convinced of the opposite view.

'Bilateral' and 'secret' are different. There is no necessity to keep 'bilateral' meetings/texts 'secret', nor is there any need to announce these to everybody. I do not fetishise 'bilateral' meetings/texts, so long as they are undertaken for the purpose of clarification when participants feel it's better to thrash things out between themselves first. I can't see anything wrong with them, though any prolongation is a sign that something is wrong, either with the participants, or the organization, or both. "Secret" is something different. Anything 'secret' is a reflection of something wrong, again, either with the participants, or the organization, or both.

### Conclusion

The ICC realizes that it has to draw lessons from its crisis, and professes to have already done so. But, unfortunately, it refuses to draw the real lessons. Personal animus, manipulation, laxity in discipline, etc. have been put forward as causes of its crisis. But, why did all these factors, if they were really the causes, work through disagreements over non-programmatic issues? (That a majority of the splitters subsequently degenerated into libertarianism and federalism is no a posteriori proof that they were originally reacting to centralism as such, just as the degeneration of the Russian Revolution is no a posteriori proof that it was from the beginning only a bourgeois revolution.) As an illustration of its refusal to tackle the real issues, the ICC steadfastly refuses to even consider the political questions raised by the CBG, which it regards as no more than an 'anti-ICC rag', 'a bunch of gangsters', 'the sooner it disappeared, the better'. I can understand the aggravation involved in the Aberdonian split, but should that blind us from the political questions? "I can't see the point of speaking to someone [the CBG] who threatened to call the police on comrades", a comrade of the ICC said to me. I replied: are we to abandon the contribution [though there isn't much] of Internationalism because it abandoned the class struggle for over a decade?

Among the questions I discussed with the ICC was integration. I said though I disagree with the Left in Opposition, the critique of the theory of the weak link, Luxemburg's pseudo-crisis theory, the 'conservative by nature' view of the state, the historic course, these are non-programmatic. The reply, to my surprise, was that though these questions are non-programmatic, nevertheless, agreement is important, if not essential, for a member to function in the ICC! I continued: does that mean that the ICC would not integrate someone who defended all the class positions but disagreed with these issues? The telling reply was: but the historic course is in the platform! (13) Thus, in its very own words, the ICC confirms the CBG's allegation: monolithism. Either one agrees with the majority on all non-programmatic issues, or one will find it difficult, if not impossible, to function within it.

The majority through the central organs becoming the 'divine saviours' of the class. The class becoming an unconscious mass of semi-inorganic matter. Members of minorities becoming eunuchs. The rest of the milieu becoming nursery infants. That's the caption on the cover of the ICC's Statutes! (14)

LLM/Hong Kong July 1984

### Postscript

Some time ago the CWO invited the ICC to co-sign a leaflet on the Iran-Iraq war which, predictably, the ICC refused. Though sectarianism and organizational rivalry seem to be the reasons behind the refusal, one of the reasons given was: the ICC had a different analysis of the war from the CWO. On review, this might, in fact, be a genuine reason instead of an excuse. Unless revolutionaries are 'destined' to hold a single analysis on each and every question, both theoretical and circumstantial, both existing and new, I wonder how the world party can ever be formed on the basis the ICC demands.

The ICC claims to be the guardians against sectarianism. WR 69 claims to have the "desire for open confrontation of positions between all tendencies..." The facts, however, are a little different, as we will see in the part "Theoretical Degeneration". In order to justify its refusal to address any of the political questions raised by the CBG concerning organization, the ICC maintains that it is a non-proletarian group. Never in the history of the working class struggle, has one org-



anization expressed so many times in public its desire to see another group disappear. "There are not 300 taels of silver buried in the ground here." Never in the history of the working class struggle, has one group instead of denouncing another politically, "denounce it for existing at all". (WR 71) (The reader can judge for himself the ICC's mud-throwing game over the Chenier affair & the Aberdonian split. I don't intend to be played into its hand—see pt. 1 under "The ICC's Letter (circa July)", infra.) The ICC claims to be "motivated by the...concern for the health of the whole milieu." (ibid.) The true face of this benevolent concern is shown, as is already obvious to everyone in the milieu but the ICC itself, by how it responded when I put forward the same political points the CBG has been making: I got one mighty word in reply: Libertarianism! Well, a blank assertion, without even any veiled attempt to substantiate it, at least breaks its silence, though likely to be the first and last time. Here is a letter of 16.5.84 the ICC wrote to me, after reading my "Is the ICC Tending Towards Monolithism?".

"Dear LLM,

16.5.84

We are disappointed at your bilan of your trip to Europe. (15) It seems to us that your attitude towards the Bulletin group undermines more or less everything you have achieved since you broke from your libertarian background. If you are willing to accomodate with the CBG, then all your protestations of taking a 'hard' attitude on the role of the Party are meaningless. What is the use of talking of the Party at all if you do not understand what is meant by the principle of defence of the organization (by violence if necessary)?

...this principle stands by itself, and adequately shows why the CBG has put itself outside the revolutionary milieu...

We may be made a mistake ourselves [our 'divine' schoolmaster making a self-criticism of the design of his course!/] in not realizing to what extent the question of organization would be pivotal in discussions with you. We are not intending to close debate with you. But if you want to continue the discussion on your side, then it is the question of organization that has to be clarified. We insist on the primacy of this question because without organization there is no perspective for work, and theory becomes academicism.

....

Fraternally,  
MD for the ICC"

Below is my reply:

"Dear ICC comrades,

25.5.84

I refer to your letter of 16.5.84 and would like to reply as follows.

1. You accuse me of not understanding "what is meant by the principle of defence of the organization (by violence if necessary)". I presume you make this allegation on the basis that I published the text "Is the ICC Tending Towards Monolithism?" in the Bulletin no. 5, ie, that I am "accomodat~~ing~~ with", to use your derogatory term, what you consider to be a non-proletarian group, because it threatened to call the police on you ("this principle of defence of the organization stands by itself, and adequately shows why the CBG has put itself outside the revolutionary milieu"). May I ask:

Did I or did I not in the "Forward" to my text say "the forerunners of the Bulletin group (...) were wrong in the following: 1. to threaten to call the police.." (p.18)?

May be you think that is not enough, because the very act of publishing my text in the Bulletin shows I do not understand what I am saying. ie, the question is your accusation that the CBG is a non-proletarian group. May I ask:

- a. Have the CBG admitted or have they not that they were wrong to have threatened to call the police?
- b. If they have, what class line have they crossed which they have not corrected?
- c. If their correction of their mistake was not enough to 'grace' them in your 'theory' of what a proletarian group is, what basis do you have to consider, for example, the PCInt as proletarian, since they participated in the partisan movement in Italy towards the end of WW2, in defencism in general during that period, in united frontism from above (IR 32) (16), in trade-unionism, parliamentarianism, and still have not admitted their past mistakes?

I look forward to answers to these questions from you and not blank assertions that I am 'degenerating' back to my 'libertarian background'... As if a simple label was an argument, and an adequate argument at that.

2. You say the question of organization is important, and will only continue to discuss this question alone

(at least, for the moment). (Though you phrase it the other way round, "We are not intending to close debate with you. But if you want to continue the discussion on your [1?] side...", it is clear that you are the one who is saying that you are not prepared to discuss anything else: "We /ie, you/ insist on the primacy of this question because without organization there is no perspective for work, and theory becomes academism."...

...If you seriously mean what you say, namely, that the question of organization is important, my text in the Bulletin is already a good starting point. I do look forward to your answer publically, but, judging by your determination, as against your claim, not to discuss the question seriously, I am not hopeful. May be you think my arguments are worth less than shit. If so, at least you could have 'enlightened' me and the readers of the Bulletin?

.....

Fraternally,  
LLM"

An organization that refuses to answer criticism (this is not new, as will be seen in the following part, but never has it been so stubborn and absolute). An organization the statutes of which make a mockery of communist principles. Let members of the ICC ask themselves, both internally and publically, whether this is the kind of organization that they want. Let members of the ICC answer the questions raised in this text and others raised by the CBG and others, fearlessly, the way communist revolutionaries do, both internally and publically. Let the class and the rest of the milieu hear the voice of oppositional forces within the ICC raised against the degenerating tendencies. (17) Don't repeat the mistakes of the Aberdonians and the other seceders! If you don't fight against these tendencies now, it will soon become too late, and we will never learn how to build a communist organization that's worthy of the name. Let the rest of the milieu address these questions. These are questions of the class struggle itself, not any trip into 'political introversion'.

### Footnotes

1. This point requires clarification, in view of the current controversy over the scientific status of Marxism. It is obvious that I regard Marxism as scientific. But this is not to say Marxists are objective scientists. Precisely the opposite. Marxism is scientific be-



cause it is partisan. Precisely because the proletariat is the last exploited class fighting to abolish classes and exploitation altogether that its theoreticians are able to arrive at the scientific theory that "the history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggles", that ideology is ideology because it defends the interests of an exploiting class. Put this way, it is immediately clear why this science is not accessible to some non-existing objective observers, but only to partisans of the proletariat. Marxism is the only theory of society the premise of which (production) has an objective existence outside of the theory which is irreducible, & which does not require any philosophical support from within the theory itself. This premise, together with the form-&-content methodology, renders Marxism scientific. (All ideological theories of society depart from a philosophical premise &/or utilize the positivist method.) Marx & Engels were able to arrive at the premise of production because it is the heart of exploitation. (There is a detailed discussion on pp. 33-40.)

2. The CWO's view of organizational discipline and minorities is, as we will see, similar to, ie, commits the same mistake as the ICC's.

3. I beg the reader's pardon for talking about monolithism before defining it. My reasons for doing so will become clear as we proceed.

4. The CBG have told me that there was once indeed one article criticising the Left in Opposition view in WR, which, however, I cannot recall.

5. The tasks of comrades holding views different from those held by leading members in the ICC seem (I say 'seem' because though the evidence is convincing, it is not conclusive) to be made more difficult by the following. From discussions I've had with many members of the ICC from various sections, I've gained the impression that the group takes a very light attitude towards theory, which it has disguised as an anti-intellectualist or anti-academicist stance. Other comrades in the milieu have also made similar comments. For example: "Making reference to an economic theory (eg. saturated markets) while refusing to elaborate on it...To label interest in economic theory as academism...at one point, we (in Seattle) undertook the study of Capital in order to improve our economic understanding. This was repeatedly criticized by the ICC without any definite alternative course of economic study being proposed." (Letter to the ICC, Internationalism no. 20, p.17) The consequence of downplaying theoretical work is, to name the one relevant here, comrades, being deficient theoretically, will blindly endorse the positions, however unsound, taken by the most esteemed (for whatever rea-

son's members. Every different view, however sound, is predestined to become a minority view, comrades putting them forward predestined to fight an uphill battle. In saying this I brave likely accusations that I am insulting the ICC. But, to give just one example, I have personally met comrades who, though obviously have not read Capital or Grossmann/Mattick or even Luxemburg, tried to 'defend' the latter's crisis theory.

6. For the ICC, the central organs have precisely this 'divine saviour' role. Ditto for the CWO: in its internal debate on the Italian Left, the comrades critical of what is now the official position demanded in one text "To have these conclusions incorporated in a text in RP." (RP no.20, p.12) They received this reply: "The decision to publish this debate in our press will be made on the grounds of its contribution to revolutionary clarity." (ibid., p.14) Though this reply was signed, the comrade is an editor of the CWO's press, and I believe his view is also the CWO's official view. According to this view, the central organs have the right to decide for the class as well as the rest of the milieu, not to mention for the 'rank and file' of the organization, what does and does not 'contribute to revolutionary clarity'. (Note: this is different from the correct view that individual texts do not have any right of automatic publication--see later.)

7. Pravda also carried the debate over Brest-Litovsk.-- For us today, the issues of industrial administration & other economic matters should be programmatic, but the milieu has so far exerted next to nil effort on questions concerning the transitional program (both economic and political). Are we to repeat the mistakes of the revolutionaries of the last revolutionary wave, who had analysed the transitional program as much as Milton Friedman has analysed the source of profit? The section "What Is Socialism?" in the Chinese text "Eastern Capitalism: A Politico-Economic Analysis" in this issue is a contribution.

8. In an attempt to 'synthesize' the two positions, the resolution adopted says the task of the state "will be to codify, legalise and sanction an already existing economic order" (p.80, State pamphlet), yet, at the same time, it is "of guaranteeing the advances of this transitional society." These two tasks are clearly contradictory: one excludes the other, because the "already existing economic order" contains surviving capitalist relations, not any "advances". An ICC comrade replied that what it means is that all previous 'advances' are 'already existing' before a new 'advance' comes, so the two tasks do not exclude one another and

the state is still 'conservative by nature'. According to this view, all administration is 'conservative by nature', including the administration of things under communism. So what we are, and what we would be fighting for, is something conservative!

9. The CBG made the following comment concerning this point in a letter to me: "we think that it's the correct starting point for approaching the issue, but... Formal, constitutional guarantees of behaviour are quite inadequate... Take for example, the emergence of the first soviets in 1905--the party called for their disbanding unless they adopted a Social Democratic Programme and were blithely ignored by the soviets themselves and by the many, many Party members within them. Were they wrong? Should they have left the soviets and simply argued their case...? We don't think so. The fight for clarity, the process of understanding, wasn't simply a question of debate, but of action." The warning against taking a formalistic approach to organizational questions is in line with my comment in the "Forward". For the organization man of the ICC, all this must be 'hopelessly anarchistic'.

10. In fact, they 'do': "a tendency...is not constituted straight away around points of theoretical analysis. Such a conception of tendencies leads to a weakening of the organization and a dispersal of militant energies." (p.23) Firstly, the ICC must have forgotten about its own state debate. Secondly, an organization can be 'saved' from 'weakening', its militant energies from 'dispersal' simply by having a different conception of tendencies! The facts that there can be divergent positions on non-programmatic theoretical issues are not altered one iota by not conceiving the different positions as tendencies. Or by rejecting 'such a conception of tendencies', the ICC mean they reject the necessity to discuss different non-programmatic theoretical analyses (which is often what's being done in practice)?

11. The comment in the text suffices for the present purpose. But I may mention that there is a problem concerning what's called philosophy of science regarding the concepts 'confirmation' & 'refutation' involved here. But we shan't digress.

12. This, apparently, is also the CWO's view. In a letter to EM dated 23.9.83 on the latter's split, the CWO say: "you have attacked CWO political positions in public meetings of other organizations, publicly opposed positions reached by the organization because you per-

sonally thought them wrong." I assume these are non-programmatic positions for otherwise EM would have been expelled. Apparently this is a criticism against individualism. In fact, it is to say unless the 'divine saviours' in the central organs decide that a minority view on particular questions can 'save' the class and the moment is 'opportune', minority members must keep their mouths shut.

13. What's in the Platform is that there is a resurgence of the class struggle since the late 60's after 50 years of counter-revolution, which few would dispute. The ICC's platform, in fact, contains quite a bit of Luxemburgist explanations. However, a programmatic agreement is on the class lines, and not on every twist and turn of the explanations. Similarly, the CWO's platform contains the falling rate of profit explanations, but they told me they would integrate defenders of Luxemburgist economics if all the class criteria are met. The PCInt, which also defends the falling rate of profit theory, told me something to the same effect.

14. In IR36, the ICC criticizes the CWO & the PCInt for not letting the class read their discussion texts. (p.13) Well, if the central organs of the ICC have the 'right' to decide for the class what can 'save' it & the 'opportune' moment to do so, why can't the central organs of the CWO & the PCInt have the same 'right'?

15. In addition to the text in the CB no. 5, the ICC is referring to another text that criticizes the Left in Opposition etc. (see the following part) which I sent to the ICC nine months ago (counting from the date of the ICC's letter) requesting its publication in the IR. After nine months, without one word in reply, they now tell me: this part of the ICC's letter is quoted in the following part on Theoretical Degeneration.

16. The PCInt has only admitted that their 1945 "Appeal" was united frontism from below (see RP no. 20, p. 37), despite evidence to the contrary.

17. During the 5th Congress, in addition to respect for minority rights, oppositional voices were raised concerning the following issues (there are likely to be more, but the rest has escaped my memory):

- a. Internal Bulletins are, if anything, properties of the class, not of the organization, which has no right of demanding their return from seceders;
- b. The organization should consider giving material aid to seceders who split for political reasons, to help them continue their political existence.

Unfortunately, I cannot recall how the discussion developed. In revealing the above, the organization may take me as 'breaching the security' of the movement, as far as I am concerned, I am playing my duty as a communist revolutionary.

## THEORETICAL DEGENERATION

The "Positions of the ICC" has this to say about the organization's activity: "The vital theoretical elaboration demanded by the re-awakening of the proletarian struggle after 50 years of counter-revolution". The truth of the matter, however, is that the ICC does not seem to regard theoretical elaboration as really so vital. I've already noted in the previous section the light attitude with which the ICC takes theoretical work. To give just two more examples. 1. In its 10 years of existence, the ICC has not seen it necessary to formally analyse the capitalist nature of the 'socialist' countries. Its starting point is to... assume they are capitalist and that's the end of the matter. 2. The ICC is against the labour time certificate system. As far as I know, RI (old series or new?) once featured one article criticising labour time certificates as 'just another kind of money'; this article constitutes the entire basis of the 'organization's' position. (Not knowing French, I have not had the pleasure and fortune to read this mighty article. But I have not the slightest doubt that it is the most important text on Marxist political economy since the Critique of the Getha Program. Why can I be so certain? Because by saying that labour time certificates are 'just another kind of money', it must have founded a new labour theory of value which disproves Marx's. My amateurish understanding of Marx's labour theory of value is that labour time certificates precisely abolishes value, so that exchange value, "the necessary phenomenal form of value, the only form in which value can be expressed" (Capital 1, chap. 1, section 1), loses its objective basis for existing. In such a case, my amateurish understanding of Marx's theory tells me, money, the ultimate form of value, simply has no basis of existence. Which means the RI text must have proven the existence of the category value-in-itself (Kautsky also flirted with this category as, I now believe, mistakenly criticized by Engels) in order that labour time certificates can become its phenomenal form, money-in-itself perhaps. (We shall see that the ICC uses, if only unconsciously, many X-in-itself categories.) Marx's critique of John Gray's theory of 'labour money' (Gray proposed to use direct labour time as the monetary unit) in the Critique of Political Economy (1859) and elsewhere, afterall, must have been mistaken. Were Marx and Engels alive today, they certainly would feel ashamed that several decades of study have not revealed to them these two earth-shattering categories, value-in-itself and money-in-itself!)



Worse still is the ICC's spirit of debate. WR 69 claims to have the "desire for open confrontation of positions between all tendencies within the workers' movement" & "will continue to defend the necessity for revolutionaries to develop their positions in the heat of fraternal but uncompromising polemic". The facts, however, are a little different. Whenever the ICC encounters criticisms to which it cannot reply, it simply remains silent on the point, evade it by escaping through making discursive trips into non-essential or even purely made-up false issues (a striking example of the latter is given below), but continues to propound its view as though the criticism had not been made. (Which is, of course, not to say that when it does answer to criticisms, its arguments are valid.) In the previous section, we've already seen how 'strong' is the ICC's "desire for open confrontation of positions", how 'seriously' it "defend[s] the necessity for revolutionaries to develop their positions in the heat of fraternal but uncompromising polemic." This section contains many other examples. In my letter to the ICC of 25.5.84 I said:

"You have always shown an unwillingness to defend your positions. (Example: 1. so far you have not seen fit to answer my critique of your bourgeois theory of the state [contained in a long letter of 31.5.83]; 2. while my critique of Luxemburg's economics [contained in the same letter] was focused upon the fact that it leads directly to the conclusions of simple reproduction [see the text below], your 'answer' of 28.10.83 only tells me what a couple of terms 'really' mean.) (1).... As to my text on the Left in Opposition sent to you 9 months ago, I look forward to your publishing it in its entirety and not 'some extracts'. Again, a blank assertion that it "contains the conventional empiricist arguments" only throws discredit upon yourselves. Whatever you do with the text, I shall seek publication elsewhere. Frankly, a text shelved for 9 months (so far) without a single word in reply is a measure of your 'willingness' to debate."

This was in reply to the following paragraph of the ICC's 16.5.84 letter to me:

"As for your personal [refer to comment made under 'General', supra] theories on the Left in Opposition, it seems to us that your 'clarification' of your original text simply rescinds all the positive points in the earlier text. We still aim to publish [I requested its publication in IR since the ICC published an earlier text by me in it which it has mistaken to be supportive of its position] some extracts to show

what your current position is, but it merely contains the conventional empiricist arguments against our analysis. /Indeed some "desire for open confrontation of positions"! When it mistakes you to be supporting it, it publishes your text, when you correct its misinterpretation and present your criticisms .../ Also, you do not have to persuade us /my apologies, 'divine' schoolmasters/ that there is a connection between the Left in Opposition analysis, the analysis of the course of history, and the critique of the weak link /I did not mention the last/. They are supposed to be connected--that is the purpose. That is how a perspective is deepened...." (We shall have numerous occasions to see that the ICC is often not conscious of the assumptions underlying its theories, the categories that it is using, etc.)

I do not expect the ICC to publish my critique of the Left in Opposition and related perspectives and therefore publish it here, with minor corrections of the original text. (I've also asked the CBG to publish it in the CB.) The critique of the ICC's bourgeois theory of the state below is based upon my letter of 31.5.83, some parts being slightly rewritten--see if our 'divine' schoolmasters have the 'desire' to answer it. "The ICC's majority (read members with leadership responsibilities) can still claim to 'defend' /Luxemburg's pseudo-crisis theory/ partly because they have chosen to ignore fatal criticisms to which they simply are unable to reply." I have, therefore, formulated these criticisms in a number of questions, and see if our 'divine' schoolmasters "defend the necessity" to answer them "directly, without escaping from them by making-up false issues on subsidiary points".

The reader will note that these texts have a common thread between them, namely, the criticism that the ICC's theories are based upon an idealist methodology. I have now come to the preliminary conclusion that the ICC (read its leading theoreticians) indeed represent a theoretically idealist current. (This is different from the CWO and PCInt's critique of the ICC as an ideological current. Their focus is on the question of the role of the party while mine is on theoretical methodology. Though there can be and there is indeed, as will be seen in just a moment, certain limited common ground between the two critiques, their difference is dominant. For example, I regard the CWO's 'new method' as idealist.) I cannot go into a full-scope exposition here, but the following observations should suffice for the present purpose.

1. The ICC's pamphlet "Class Consciousness & Communist Organization" says: "science appear[s] as essentially contemplative activities...the natural sciences were the prototype of an 'exact science' that, separated from its object, is restricted to the contemplation of reality drawing on the basis of an empirical assessment of the 'facts'." (p.25) (Anyone familiar with the theoretical structures of the natural sciences can tell that, similar to mathematics & logic, they are far from 'restricted' to 'an empirical assessment of the 'facts'.' But we'll ignore that.) In contrast, it says that the proletariat's class consciousness "is not an awareness about an object external to itself, but is a consciousness of what it is itself." (p.36) Furthermore: "Revolutionary theory...In no way can...be identified with an abstract science... Not content with simply understanding the world, it serves to transform it." (p.87) To precis it, according to the ICC, science = a system of ideas about an object external to it, satisfied with contemplating it (the object) without wanting to transform it; in contrast, class consciousness = 'the proletariat's awareness about itself', & seeks to transform the world. Therefore, Marxism  $\neq$  a science: "revolutionary theory has nothing in common with science". (p.88) Before going on, it is necessary to draw the distinction between a real object, ie, the directly, sensorily experienced world (eg, iron & other elements, existing societies, the occurrence of heads & tails when flipping a coin, falling bodies, etc) & a theoretical object (eg, corresponding to the examples just given respectively, proton, the relations of production, probability, gravitational pull, etc) which analyses (not abstract from, which is the positivist position) the former. It is not necessary to go into any details to refute the ICC's thesis. If I am not mistaken, Marxism contains a theory of history, namely, historical materialism, which can be applied, utilizing the theoretical objects, ie, the categories the relations of production, the productive forces & the relationship between them, to the analysis of past historical development (the real object), as the ICC itself has done on occasions, in which process the proletariat was not even existent. Certainly, these developments (the real object) are external to historical materialism (the science)? If I am not mistaken, Marxism contains a body of theory called political economy, the theoretical object of which is the relations of production, and the real object of which is past or present existing societies. Certainly, the Zhou Dynasty in China from 1121 - 256 BC (the real object) is external to Marxist political economy (the science)? Certainly, Marxist political economy can in no way 'want' to transform the Zhou Dynasty, nor can historical materialism in any way 'want' to transform the rise of feudalism? Perhaps historical materialism &



Marxist political economy are not part of Marxism, the revolutionary theory the ICC is referring to? Or Marxism isn't the revolutionary theory of the proletariat, ie, is not the highest or most advanced level of class consciousness?

The ICC's thesis is even more 'profound' than the above suggests. It is, in fact, earth-shattering. The "Class Consciousness" pamphlet says: "Capitalist alienation is reflected on a social level so that: -thought & science appear as essentially contemplative activities. Thought is like a 'glove' which is made to 'fit' reality or a cast that is moulded by, but does not transform reality... Bourgeois ideology has no place for human activity which could transform these /supra-historical/ laws, or transform humanity itself." (p.25, emphasis mine) It did not originally occur to me that the ICC is placing science (the natural or so-called empirical sciences & the formal or so-called deductive sciences, ie, logic & mathematics) on a par with bourgeois ideology. Reading the above quotation carefully, however, it appears that the ICC indeed is. Science is placed side by side with thought which, the context clearly points out, refers to bourgeois ideology. Science is said only to "appear as essentially contemplative activities", ie, it is only an illusion to think of the sciences as really 'contemplating' real objects external to them. (Let's, for simplicity's sake, ignore the question whether the formal sciences have real objects or not). I am by no means trying to read more into what the ICC means. WR 70 confirms what I'm saying in the following 'profound' comment: "the CWO cite the opening lines of the first Thesis: "The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism--that of Feuerbach included--is that the thing, reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the object, or of contemplation but not as human sensuous activity, practice, not subjectively." On the most general level, this is a critique of the bourgeoisie's conception of the relationship between man & nature /emphasis added/ ...The classic starting point of capital's 'scientific' ideology is that reality is a collection of objects which can be observed by a more or less neutral consciousness. But well before this ideology began to collapse under the weight of scientific discovery itself /emphasis added/ (especially in the field of physics), Marxism had already demonstrated that this whole standpoint represents the alienated consciousness of the bourgeoisie." (p.6) Though the ICC puts quotes around 'scientific' in the phrase "capital's 'scientific' ideology", but not around the same word in the phrase "scientific discovery itself", which seems to suggest it is distinguishing between the sciences from ideology, the thrust of the whole quotation shows that it is not. Thus, according to the ICC, nature is not an ob-

jective, independent real object external to human consciousness, to regard it as such is the "classic starting point of capital's 'scientific' ideology", "represents the alienated consciousness of the bourgeoisie"; nature, on the contrary, must also be conceived of subjectively. Put simply, it means, according to the ICC, matter (in the philosophic sense; whenever 'matter' is mentioned unqualified, it is used in this sense) does not exist. Let me deal with this very serious thesis by first making a short detour.

According to the ICC, the sciences (physics etc) are only so many ideologies because they start from the 'classic capital's ideology' that nature only be conceived of objectively, ie, as a real object existing independently of the mind. (We'll shortly see that capital's most famous epistemology & methodology, namely, positivism, holds exactly the opposite position.) In other words, their premise of the duality of mind & matter is said to be ideological. But then, on the other hand, we are told that the discoveries of these very same sciences, especially in the field of physics, refute that premise itself. How a system of ideas which departs from a given premise that it takes for granted, ie, does not question, can make discoveries which refute that very premise without the premise being questioned in the first place is beyond me. Ask any ex-devout christian whether it was possible for his theological studies to 'reveal' that God does not exist, without himself first giving up the assumption that he does. (God's existence can neither be proved nor disproved.) The mistake the ICC makes in talking about scientific discoveries 'disproving' the premise of the sciences itself is familiar enough: a confusion between a category of human thought (eg, time, space, causation, mind, matter--these are the building blocks of human thought itself) and a scientific concept of these categories (eg, whether matter in the scientific sense is particle or wave). Scientific concepts change with advances in the sciences, categories of human thought remain. We are all familiar with Machism which Lenin criticized in Materialism & Empirio-Criticism. What Machism amounted to in this respect was this: following Mach's finding that matter in the scientific sense might be wave, the Machists jumped to the conclusion that matter in the philosophic sense had 'disappeared', ie, fell right back into idealism. The scientific concept of matter may & does change, but the category matter does not. Matter does not disappear because scientifically it is wave. To use scientific discoveries to 'disprove' a category of human thought is one essence of empirio-criticism, or, to use the term more often used, empiricism.

Having shown the ICC's thesis that scientific discoveries

are 'disproving' the premise of the duality of mind & matter for what it is, it's now time to deal with its thesis that matter does not exist. As seen, according to the ICC, reality must, in addition to being conceived of objectively, also be conceived of subjectively. Now, anyone at all familiar with philosophy can tell that it is not necessary to believe that God created the universe to be an idealist. Many, in fact most, idealists do not deny the existence of nature. For example, Berkeley says: "I do not argue against the existence of any one thing that we can apprehend, either by sense or reflection. That the things I see with my eyes & touch with my hands do exist, really exist, I make not the least question. The only thing whose existence we deny is that which philosophers call Matter or corporeal substance...if the word substance be taken in the vulgar sense, for a combination of sensible qualities, such as extension, solidity...-this, we cannot be accused of taking away; but if it be taken in a philosophic sense, for the support of...qualities without the mind - then indeed I acknowledge that we take it away, if one may be said to take away that which never had any existence". ("Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge", quoted in Lenin, op.cit., Foreign Language Press, Peking, 1972, p.18). Another example: it is well-known that positivism, as an epistemology is a form of subjective idealism, because, according to it, the objective world cannot be regarded as existing independently of man's cognitive activities & means of cognition. (For instance, positivism says there are only particular triangles cognized through sensory experience, but no 'ideal' triangle which is supersensible.) In other words, the line of demarcation between idealism & materialism is this: idealism rejects the existence of 'matter in motion', ie, it rejects the existence of an objective world outside of human cognition, while materialism departs from the premise of the existence, & prior at that, of matter. Need I state the obvious? In saying that reality must also be conceived of subjectively, the ICC is quite simply propounding an idealist epistemology.

In Ludwig Feuerbach Engels says that the history of philosophy is but an age-old struggle between two tendencies: idealism & materialism. In between these two tendencies, there is a third composed of those whom Engels dubbed as "shamefaced materialists", ie, Kantianism & Humism. Engels points out that the "shamefaced materialists" do not deny the existence of nature, but only deny its independence from human cognition. He cites the Kantian things-in-themselves which are said to be unknowable. Lenin (op.cit.) picks up Engels' thesis and says that agnosticism (Kantianism & Humism) is but a surreptitious guise to reintroduce idealism. It is true that both Engels & Lenin have

misunderstood the Kantian category 'things-in-themselves', but their, especially Lenin's, fundamental theses are correct & very crucial: 1. There is no third road, either one is for materialism, in which matter exists & is primary (Lenin says the mind is only 'the highest organization of matter'), or one is for idealism, in which matter does not exist. 2. At the bottom line, neither materialism nor idealism could be proved or refuted. Now, this obviously appears to be a very crude thesis, without the embellishments of all the sophistry of the great debates between the two tendencies. But we laymen in philosophy (I am, like Lenin was, a layman in philosophy & study it only insofar as the question of method is concerned), as should & do philosophers, well know, that the matter is ultimately as simple as this, viz, that materialism & idealism are premises. Lenin puts this very clearly, for eg, on this occasion: "And Diderot, who came very close to the standpoint of contemporary materialism (that arguments & syllogisms alone do not suffice to refute idealism, and that here it is not a question for theoretical argument).."  
(op.cit., p.26) One departs from either one of these two premises and practise them, either consciously or spontaneously, ie, unconsciously. The materialist departs from the existence of matter & its primacy, and refuses to regard human thought (scientific or social) as deriving from itself, but is premised upon the material world. (To avoid any unnecessary accusation, this formulation, of course, has nothing whatsoever to do with positivism, according to which sensory experience is the source of all knowledge, & knowledge, to be scientific, must be reducible to irreducible observation statements. In fact, the following example suffices to show the antipositivist stance of the above formulation.) To give one example: the law of gravity is a theoretical object constructed by the mind, but from the materialist standpoint, it is constructed to analyse (not abstract from) a real object, viz, the movement of the stars & planets, which exists in the philosophic sense. It does not derive from itself: without the real object, the theoretical object wouldn't have existed. (NB: this example is not meant to be a 'prove' or even 'illustration' of the validity of materialism, it is simply to state its premise.)

That is exactly how Marx was a materialist: he practised materialism. How? He analysed history & society materialistically, on the basis of men's production of their material life. (Cf. my comment in footnote 1. in the previous section concerning why Marxism is scientific.) Just as the fact that theoretical objects are constructs of the mind does not do away, for the materialist, with the existence of matter, that history is made by men (more precisely, by men constituted into classes since the fall of primitive

communism), ie, that the social world is not independent of social relations of production, does not do away with the material basis of history. Social ideas (philosophical, ethical, religious, economic, political, etc) have their material premise in the relations of production, which, in turn, are conditioned upon the development of the productive forces. Marx did not do away with the duality of mind & matter: certain forms of idealism do. For him, as for every materialist, matter is external to, independent of, existed before and will exist after men, and on it human thought is premised. Similarly, bourgeois ideology is premised upon the specific position of the bourgeoisie in the capitalist relations of production. The duality that Marx did do away with is the duality of ideology, namely, that there is assumed to be a socially 'objective' thinking mind mediating between itself and an 'objective' social world. By means of this kind of 'aloof', 'objective' mediation between an 'objective' social world and a socially 'objective' thinking mind, ideology professes to be 'objective'. Marxism is not ideology precisely because it recognizes itself to be partisan. It is scientific for reasons I've already mentioned (footnote 1. in the previous section).

It is well-known that Marx never doubted the objectivity of the sciences. (2) WR 70 wishes to convince us that he did by citing the first thesis on Feuerbach. But the Theses are talking about materialism as applied to the study of history & society, ie, about the duality of ideology. The first thesis ends with this: "Hence he does not grasp the significance of 'revolutionary', of 'practical-critical' activity." Is Marx supposed to be talking about 'revolutionizing', 'criticizing' light, heat, etc, etc?! If there is any remaining doubt, theses 9 & 10 should cast it away absolutely. Men may one day be able to steer the stars, but, for the materialist, that does not change the view of the prior existence of matter. To call such a conception ideological is to fall headlong into idealism.

I do not bring the above up as an epistemological argument or for the purpose of starting (or attempting to start) a debate on epistemology. As said, such debates are ultimately debates about nothing. The real question is the question of methodological practice. I criticize the ICC's idealist epistemology because it is not a question of epistemological argument, but gets translated into methodological practice. In such practice, one either departs from the materialist premise in which 'social being determines consciousness' or from the idealist premise in which 'consciousness determines being'. It will be seen in the texts below, as on numerous other occasions (for eg, in its analysis of the degeneration of the Russian Revolution - see "Outlines of Chinese Texts"), that the ICC more often

than not departs from the latter premise.

2. According to the ICC, the economic programme after the seizure of power is 'secondary', because 'any economic mistake can be corrected'. (See any of their texts on the Russian Revolution & the related comments on the transitional programme.) While it is true that the revolution begins as a political act & the infrastructure is changed through the proletariat first conquering the superstructure and holding on to its conquest, to say that the economic programme is 'secondary' means to say that the proletariat can for any period of time manage a capitalist economy without having to answer to the needs of capital, ie, without its revolutionary consciousness being, not of its own will, but arising from the ownership of capital, eaten away. Indeed some 'materialist' method.

3. The ICC proposes rationing as the transitional economic programme. What did Marx say about the relationship between production (the base) and distribution (the superstructure)? Just as Marx turned Hegel's dialectics on its head, the ICC turns Marx's political economy on its.

- continued on next page -



An analysis of the origin of the state in which historical materialism is replaced by functionalism (second text below). An economic theory based upon a methodology that is a tautology ( first text below). A theory that says history can be suspended by a not-yet-revolutionary-but-undefeated-yet level of consciousness on the part of the proletariat (third text below). And we can multiply the list infinitely. Coincidence? The revelations of WR 70 and the pamphlet "Communist Organization and Class Consciousness" suggest otherwise.

### Footnotes

1. The ICC letter says: "you are not so distant from the ICC on the question of economics as you think. Part of your argument against us seems to depend on a confusion of terms. You take the words overaccumulation and overproduction to mean different things. In your usage, 'overaccumulation' seems to refer to 'capital', 'overproduction' to mean 'unsaleable products'. We do not make a differentiation between the phenomenon of unsaleable products and the phenomena of overproduction in other spheres. And I am not aware that Marx makes any such distinction. The term 'overproduction' simply means 'overproduction of capital'. Unsaleable products going onto a saturated market are one manifestation of an overproduction of capital. These products going onto a market, after all, only represent one of the metamorphoses of capital. I think it is true that Luxemburg puts an especial emphasis on this manifestation of overproduction, given her view on the critical role of 'third buyers'. Whereas Marx puts no special emphasis on this expression of the general phenomenon of the crisis of overproduction of capital--at least he does not make it a special causal factor. But then Luxemburg is not claiming to simply reproduce what Marx says. Consequently, I do not think that Luxemburg's argument can be refuted by saying that she puts the emphasis on a surface phenomenon. She puts the emphasis on one aspect of a general phenomenon--and deduces the rest of the general phenomenon from that aspect. Whether or not Luxemburg's argument is correct, it cannot be declared faulty simply on this ground. A general glut in the market place would necessarily entail that there was an overproduction of capital in general--an 'overaccumulation' (if you like) of means of production, of labour power, of money capital. A glut of products obviously entails surplus capacity in industry, and therefore a curtailment of outlets for investment capital." Sounds like a 'profound exposition', doesn't it? For anyone who has read Marx, Grossmann/Mattick & Luxemburg, however, that it is a falsely made-up issue, the only purpose of which is to evade real discussion, is clear as daylight. This is revealed by the

fact that the 'exposition' contradicts itself at every other sentence, not to mention the terms as used by Marx and Luxemburg are raped of their original meanings & re-defined to suit the purpose of evasion. I'll mention a few of these self-contradictions for the purpose of illustration. 1. 'Overproduction of capital' is said to be a phenomenon, yet 'unsaleable products' are said to be one of its manifestation. A manifestation of a phenomenon? Forgive my ignorance, such a methodology is beyond me. 2. We are told, on the one hand, Luxemburg makes a manifestation of a phenomenon 'a special causal factor', we are then told, on the other, her argument does not deal with a surface phenomenon. A manifestation of a phenomenon, if it means anything at all, is part of that phenomenon, to say that it is 'not' a surface phenomenon does not do away with the fact that it is phenomenal, which, by definition, refers to something on the surface. 3. After telling us that Luxemburg is not dealing with a surface phenomenon, we are told that 'she puts the emphasis on one aspect of a general phenomenon'! Enough. I think I'll understand this 'exposition' after going through a course on methodology in a psychiatric hospital. 2. How could he? The analysis of value relations is basically algebraic in nature.

## ON LUXEMBURG'S CRISIS THEORY

It is a matter of wonder that such a bankrupt theory as Luxemburg's pseudo-crisis theory can be seriously held by revolutionaries who care to spend time investigating it. That the ICC's majority (read members with leadership responsibilities) can still claim to 'defend' it, is partly because they have chosen to ignore fatal criticisms to which they simply are unable to reply. Let the ICC's majority (ditto), or any Luxemburgist, answer the following questions directly, without escaping from them by making up false issues on subsidiary points (an infamous tactic it uses most of the time), if not publicly (which judging from past experience, is not to be expected), at least privately to themselves. The first question is fundamental, Luxemburg's pseudo-theory stands and falls with it, the others (and we can lengthen the list easily) provide further proof of its bankruptcy.

### Fundamental Question

1. Let total world capital =  $C + V + S_1 + S_2$ ,  $S_1$  being the part of  $S$  consumed by the capitalists (we ignore, for the sake of simplicity, all other unproductive expenditures of  $S$ ),  $S_2$  the part of  $S$  to be capitalized.

Luxemburg's pseudo-theory amounts simply to asserting that S2 cannot be realized, ie, metamorphosed from commodity-capital into money-capital, within the capitalist framework, and therefore has to be, and can only be realized in extra-capitalist markets. (On the other hand,  $C + V + S1$  can be realized within the framework of capital, according to Luxemburg.) If this was true, it means that trade between capitalist and extra-capitalist areas must, on aggregate, be one-sided, bringing a balance of trade surplus to capitalist areas amounting to S2--this is the very meaning of the realization of S2 in extra-capitalist markets. Never mind where the money comes from that the extra-capitalist areas use to realize S2 for capitalist areas, ie, buy the commodities represented by S2. At the end of the day, capitalist areas would have accumulated the money form of S2, ie, an amount of money-capital equivalent to S2. But, in order for it to continue to function as capital, it must in turn metamorphose into productive capital (new C & V). Yet, we've seen just now that the commodities represented by S2 have already been sold to extra-capitalist areas. How on earth is this second metamorphosis (using Marx's symbols,  $M - C$ , or more precisely,  $M - L + MP$ ) supposed to be able to occur, only the ICC knows. As far as I can see, it won't be able to occur simply because it is impossible. Which means that Luxemburg's pseudo-theory takes us directly to this conclusion: while capitalist areas continue to accumulate money-capital (S2 being realized in extra-capitalist markets), this capital is fictitious, because reproduction in capitalist areas can only continue on the simple scale. Let the ICC enlighten us ignorant!

### Other Questions

2. The ICC agrees that capital, by increasing the rate of exploitation can delay the effects of the crisis, ie, provide temporary relief. This makes perfect sense under the falling rate of profit theory since by increasing  $S/V$ , the profit squeeze can temporarily be eased. But this simply is impossible under Luxemburg's pseudo-theory. By increasing  $S/V$ , what capital is doing is to

increase S2 (let S1 be constant) at the expense of V. But, according to Luxemburg's pseudo-theory, the 'cause' of the crisis is, with the market saturated, S2 cannot be realized. How on earth, then, could it help to increase the amount of S2 which cannot be realized in any case? As far as each individual unit of capital is concerned, by increasing S/V, it is able to sell its products cheaper than its competitors and therefore obtain relief. But for total world capital as a whole--the ICC always advises us that the correct departure point is the category of total world capital--a bigger or smaller S2 which cannot be realized anyway makes not one bit of difference.

3. As Marxists, we all know the defining characteristic of the Marxist methodology--analysis of the underlying relations which determine (cause) the surface phenomena. According to the ICC, Luxemburg's pseudo-theory 'possesses' this feature. For example, they say the crisis of overproduction manifests itself in the Eastern countries as a shortage of capital and consumption goods (how on earth is this exactly possible is again some secret knowledge of the ICC, but this is not the point I'm after here): "In the countries of the Russian bloc, the same global crisis of overproduction manifests itself in long lines before empty stores... together with a chronic scarcity of capital..." ("Economic Crisis: Descent Into the Abyss & the Impasse of the Capitalist Class", part of the Resolution on the International Situation passed by its 5th Congress, IR 35, p.5). How, then, does the crisis of overproduction 'manifest' itself in the West? The crisis of overproduction 'manifests' itself in overproduction! Or, the crisis of the saturation of markets (which is the same thing as overproduction) 'manifests' itself in saturated markets! Let the ICC twist and turn in whatever way it sees fit, these terms, redefining their 'real' meanings, it won't be able to escape from the fact that it is a mere tautology. The 'cause' = the phenomenon. May be the ICC wants to tell us that the 'cause' is the inability of the workers to buy up S2? (That will actually make the crisis a crisis of underconsumption, which the ICC itself rejects.) But this 'cause' always exists, before, during and after the crisis. What, according to Luxemburg's pseudo-theory, 'causes' the crisis, is the 'saturation' of the extra-capitalist markets; before their 'saturation', they 'provided' the effective demand for S2. The ICC can spend page after page trying to convince us and itself that Luxemburg's pseudo-theory is 'not empiricist'. But, at the bottom line, the question is really very simple: is the above a tautology or not?

As a further illustration of how the ICC utterly fails

to understand the essence of the Marxist methodology, let me quote from WR 66: "one must identify why the bourgeoisie goes to war... Contrary to the theories of ... and those apparently defended by the CWO today, the bourgeoisie does not go to war in order to destroy constant... capital, thus permitting a new cycle of accumulation. The destruction of capital values, and the consequent post-war reconstruction permitting renewed accumulation, are consequences of war and not objectives. /Our theoreticians must think they are making a 'profound' analysis./ It would indeed be attributing an incredible degree of consciousness to the bourgeoisie to insist it understood clearly /for once, they understand/ the consciousness of the bourgeoisie, thank heavens/ that it must destroy its productive apparatus to survive! In fact, in the real world /our 'guardians' against empiricism betray their empiricist tail/, the bourgeoisie sets out to weaken and then capture the productive apparatus, markets, technology and raw materials of its rivals, of other national capitals. If all the bourgeoisie wanted to do was destroy its productive apparatus, then it could simply blow it up." (p.7) When in Paris last year, a member of the international central organs also asked me: how is the bourgeoisie supposed to be able to know that it needs to devalue capital? The truth of the matter is, the bourgeoisie does not know. Competing capitals always fight for raw materials and markets in order to out-compete rivals. As the profit squeeze tightens, on the phenomenal level, in the consciousness of the bourgeoisie, that is to say, in the 'real world' the ICC talks about, the need to out-compete rivals and the fight for raw materials and markets intensifies, so that rivals bear the brunt of the crisis. (The need to increase S/V increases as well, of course.) It is the impasse of the profit squeeze that causes the intensification of imperialist rivalry and war. The winning side is able to grab hold of sources of raw materials and markets and, therefore, be able to obtain a competitive advantage over the losing side. But for world capital as a whole, the renewed cycle of accumulation is made possible by the devaluation of capital during the war, which is unknown to the bourgeoisie. Only that now the winning side will be able to accumulate at an advantage over the losing side, and when the crisis is renewed, pass off part of its burden onto the shoulders of the losing side. To assume that for a theory of capital's inner laws to be valid, it is necessary to prove that the bourgeoisie is aware of these laws (which is also the assumption underlying the ICC's infamous view of the consciousness of bourgeoisie) is an insult to the method



founded by Marx.

As a further index of how little the ICC understands value theory, simply blowing up C does not devalue it vis-a-vis the V employed by it, ie, it leaves the organic composition of capital unchanged. What it does is only to reduce the quantity, both in physical & value terms, of C, and therefore also the quantity of V it employs. Only war, during which replacement investment does not take place or does but at a low level such that net investment is negative, devalues C vis-a-vis the V it employs, thereby lowering the organic composition. The technical composition, however, is not affected. (The difference between capital devaluation in an economic crisis & in war is a difference in degree.)

\* \* \*

The bourgeois empiricist methodology the ICC displays in its 'defence' of Luxemburg's pseudo-theory is but one of many signs of the idealist method underlying most of its 'theories'. But to disprove Luxemburg's theory, it is not even necessary to take up the methodological issue. Its own internal logic provides all the proof necessary for its refutation.

## THE ICC'S BOURGEOIS THEORY OF THE STATE

This text is a much shortened and partly rewritten version of the critique contained in my letter of 31.5.83 to the ICC. In that critique, there is a lengthy dis-

cussion of the degeneration of the Russian Revolution occurring through the state (not, as the ICC says, originating from the state as the state). This is cut out because it is now clear to me that the ICC's understanding of the degeneration of the Russian Revolution as well as the nature of the transitional period is so deficient, ie, ideological, that to criticize its bourgeois theory of the state by making reference to the conclusions it draws concerning the state from its ideological understanding of the degeneration of the Russian Revolution (which inevitably is tied to its understanding of the nature of the transitional period) can only lead to confusion. I have, therefore, limited the scope of this text to a consideration of methodology, which, in any case, is the fundamental issue. An empirical examination of the formulation 'the state is by nature conservative' is added.

\* \* \*

### Origins of the State: The Question of Methodology-- Historical Materialism or Functionalism? (1)

The ICC's position is basically a rejection of the allegedly simplistic formulation:

Society -- class -- ruling class -- state.

For the ICC, "Marxism has... never considered the state to be the ex nihilo creation of the ruling class, but as the product, the organic secretion of the whole of society". (p. 74 - refer to footnote 1 on the revelatory term 'organic'. - all page reference from the ICC's State pamphlet, unless specified otherwise.)

According to the ICC, several natural elements "underlay the internal unity and cohesion" (p.64) of gentile society, which, however, was dislocated as a result of a "whole evolution": "The loss of its former cohesion and unity and the conflicts between antagonistic interests now constituted into classes, left a vacuum which society, like nature such as the human organism? - refer to footnote 17, could only abhor... to reconstitute cohesion... the state" emanated from society because the loss of the former cohesion and the conflicts "imposed on it" the need for the state. (pp. 65 & 64 respectively, emphasis added) There are two moments mentioned here which are said to impose on society the need for the state, namely, "the loss of its former cohesion and unity" and the constitution of classes. One cannot help but ask: which is the decisive moment of the two? I shall shortly show that this formulation has nothing in common with the materialist conception of history, but as a passing remark: the relationship between these two moments can only either be both are decisive (in

which case 1. it has to be explained why they occurred at the same time, what if they did not? and 2. it is immediately obvious that it makes a mockery of the materialist conception of history), or only one is decisive (in which case, which one?) I won't pursue these questions in the following analysis, they are raised just to show how 'rigorous' the ICC's theory is.

Gentile society (2) spanned from the upper stage of savagery to the dawn of civilization embracing in it two major forms of the family, the punaluan family and the pairing family, the latter being the "form characteristic of barbarism". (Origins, p. 60) The development of the productive forces reached the stage of producing some surplus beyond men's minimal survival needs in the middle stage of barbarism thus creating wealth in herds, etc. As the economic surplus became significant and stable, private wealth, which dealt the fatal blow to matriarchy (it should rather be matriliney (3)), developed. These and other developments within gentile society constitute the "whole evolution" mentioned by the ICC. But, the question is: this "whole evolution" contains a number of different but all immensely significant and consequential moments. One, therefore, wonders why cohesion was only required to be reconstituted by the state at the end of this series of moments. Why did not, for example, the replacement over a period of time of the punaluan family by the pairing family, which surely did produce very serious dislocations, require cohesion to be reconstituted by the state? It may be said that because the blood ties were still strong enough under the pairing family to allow the gentile constitution to remain adequate in providing cohesion. But, what scientific basis has one got to say that, in contrast, the blood ties under the monogamous family were not strong enough to preserve the gentile form of social administration? In other words, any talk of cohesion is and can only be purely speculative, there simply does not and cannot exist any scientific, ie, materialist, basis for it. Nowhere in any 'cohesion' formula do the development of the productive forces, the relations of production and the relationship between them play any role at all. This point will be developed further later.

To pursue the above question further, which specific moment of the "whole evolution" led to the "invention" (Engels) of the state? It is no use lumping all the moments together and say it was the "whole evolution" which led to such an invention; for this is tantamount to saying that one is giving up scientific analysis for speculation; let the ICC give us a scientific, ie, materialist explanation of why the "whole evolution" ended

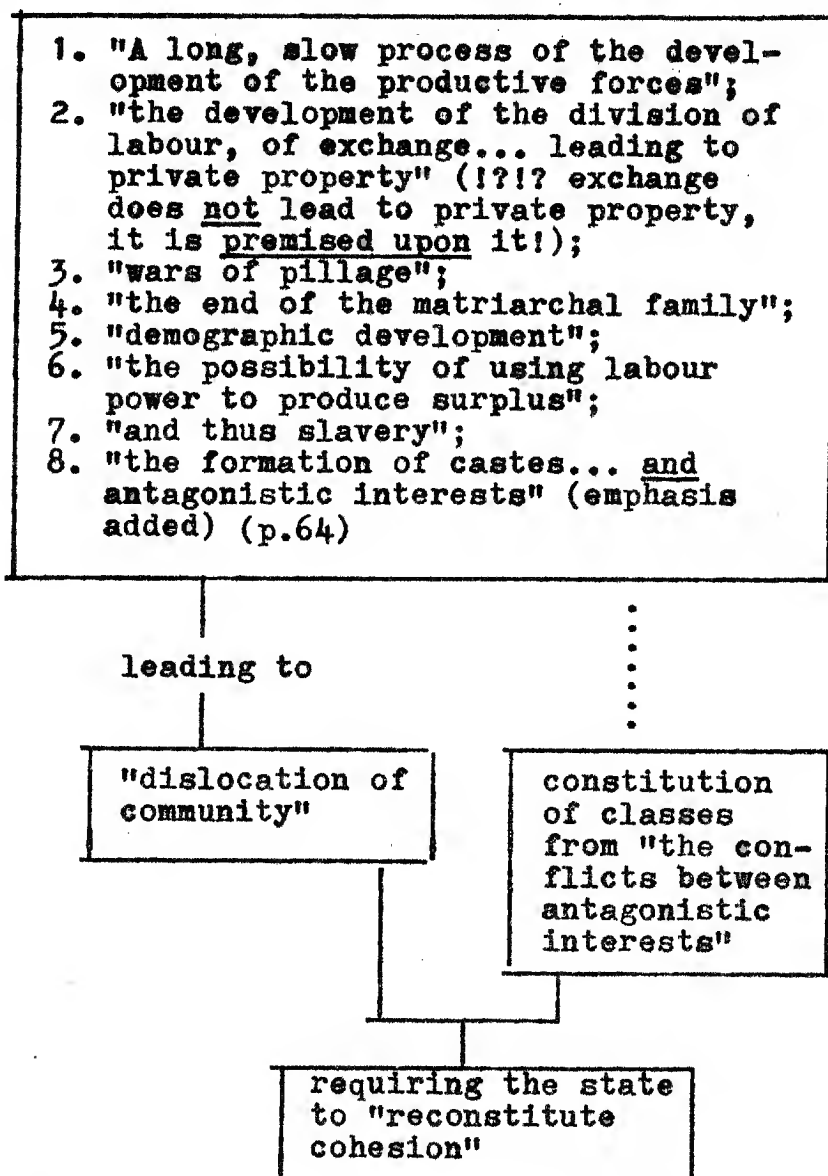
precisely at the point it did, and not at some other points.

In Origins, Engels showed beyond any trace of doubt, that the state arose from the appearance of classes, and from that alone. (4) In Athens, the state was created which divided the people into 3 classes: the nobles, the tillers and the artisans, with the right to hold office vested exclusively in the nobility, who were the wealthiest. (pp.130-1) However, a struggle between the nobles and the other two classes took place which ended in a compromise, which still strongly favoured the nobles, between them in favour of their common subordination of slaves. (pp.135-141) In Rome, essentially the same things occurred: the populus and plebs were divided into six classes on the basis of property (which was tied together with military service (5)) with the top class having, all by itself, a clear majority in the new popular assembly. The public power, ie, the state, was therefore "in opposition not only to the slaves but also... the so-called proletarians". (Origins, p.154) Thus, "the gentile constitution had suffered a... defeat" because "the old groups of blood relationship were outsd" and "a completely new element was... introduced into the constitution: private ownership". (op cit p.137)

Let us interpret the emergence of the state by the materialist conception of history. The development of the productive forces reached a level at which a significant and stable economic surplus could be produced. This allowed two things: 1. social, ie, class differentiation within the clan (gens); 2. the conquering of other clans for the extraction of economic surplus by taking them slaves (in the earliest societies, when the level of the development of the productive forces could not produce an economic surplus, the conquered were simply killed, sometimes cannibalized, because it made no sense to take slaves.) This means that the previously existing primitive communistic relations of production were no longer consistent with the development of the productive forces. They had to be overthrown, and they were. On the superstructural level, the gentile constitution, ie, the political expression of the previously existing relations of production, could neither accomodate internal class differentiation, nor was consistent with the taking of slaves. That was why in the very process of their overthrow of the previously existing relations of production, the emerging class of wealthy Athenians and Romans overthrew the gentile constitution and installed in its place the state, a new political superstructure, which fostered, as we've seen just now and will further see later, its interests.

According to the ICC, the above is a schematic oversimplification of a very complicated process. It is not

necessary to haggle over irrelevant accusations. The central issue is the above analyses the rise of the state using historical materialism as its methodology. Schematically, the ICC's more 'sophisticated' theory can be represented just as simplistically:



Here, the development of the productive forces is drowned in a nebulous cloud of factors. What about the relations of production? The relationship between the development of the productive forces and the relations of production? This a 'Marxist' theory? Can the ICC be joking? The constitution of classes is said to result from "the



conflicts of antagonistic interests" which is a tautology, and, for all intents and purposes, seem to have been smuggled into the schema from the outside: while the connection between the various factors and the "dislocation of community" predominates the entire analysis, the existence of classes is only brought in by the conjunction 'and', which is why I underlined this telling word in the relevant quotations in the above, as well as why the 'factors' box and the 'constitution of classes' box are connected only by a dotted line. It can immediately be seen that factors 2, 3, 4 & 5 existed in perfect harmony in gentile society without "dislocating the community" that the state was required. (6) What are we left with then? Factors 1, 6, 7 & 8. But this is only a bastard of the minority's (7) position. (From this to putting forward an analysis of the emergence of the state within the framework of historical materialism, as is done in the above, is, of course, still a long way.)

According to the ICC, the state arose to 'moderate' conflicts (p.64), because "No society can survive and maintain itself in such a situation; it would lead to its ruin if it allowed the classes to 'consume' each other and society as a whole. In order to avoid such a social catastrophe, society has to find a solution... as a need imposed on it". (p.64) Well, as far as the slaves were concerned (ignore the so-called proletarians, for the sake of simplicity), it would certainly have been in their interest that the society in which they were captured and enslaved, ie, slavery society be 'consumed', 'ruined', ie, did not survive--that's precisely why uprisings of slaves (& serfs in feudalism) occasionally occur. The need for this, ie, slavery society to survive was in the interests of the ruling class. In the ICC's formulation, society-in-abstract is the central category. As though the interests of the ruling class, that slavery society not be 'ruined', to attain which end it was necessary to systematically deprive the slaves of any means of conflict, etc., was identical to the interests of a metaphysical 'society as a whole' (for the 'guardians' against empiricism of the ICC, the real object to be analysed -society-is directly the category of analysis, ie, the theoretical object. Lenin called this 'objective sensualism', in epistemology, this is generally known as positivism, and the crudest variety at that) (8), ie, a society-in-itself; as though the slaves had, via society-in-itself, had the same interests as the ruling class. Just as Marx rejected to start from man- or even men-in-abstract, but from men as they produce their material life, he did not start from society-in-itself, but from society as it is divided into specific historical classes, ie, from these classes. That's what constitutes an analysis. Any theory whose categories are plucked directly from sensory experience, are directly the real object itself, that doesn't in the pres-

ent case, start from specific historical classes, but from society-in-itself is as far away from Marx's method as we are from the sun. Read any introductory text on the sociological or the anthropological method, and the ICC will find that their method is taken straight from the works of Auguste Comte, Emile Durkheim, Bronislaw Malinowski, etc. Their starting point is exactly: how is it that society (-in-itself) does not fall apart? As with the ICC, their primary concern is society's constitution of cohesion, which forms the premise upon which the dominant stream of these two branches of ideologies are built. For the functionalists, as for the ICC, history is a history of the development of society-in-itself. For Marxists, "the history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggles."

Concerning the origins of the state, therefore, the fundamental question the ICC has to answer is: where in its more 'sophisticated' theory can we find the categories the relations of production, and the relationship between them and the development of the productive forces; where can we find an analysis of the central categories of historical materialism and the relationship between them concretized in an analysis of a specific class struggle? It is no use claiming one's theory to be Marxist. One has to use the Marxist categories. It is no use claiming one's method to be Marxist. One has to depart from production, and not from metaphysical frameworks such as society-in-itself's 'need to constitute cohesion'.

### Is The State 'By Nature Conservative'?

The ICC's 'the state is conservative by nature' formulation is based entirely on its bourgeois functionalist theory of the state's origins. Just as the central category in the latter theory is society-in-itself, the central category in the former formulation is the state-as-such, the state-in-itself, with a 'nature' that is divorced from (a 'nature', by definition, obeys its own laws) specific historical development, namely, according to whether a mode of production is progressive or in decline. To say, as the ICC does, that the 'by nature conservative' state-in-itself is 'linked' to the economically dominant class does not do away with the above, as will be seen immediately. This section firstly briefly shows how the category the state-in-itself is premised upon the category society-in-itself, and then gives a number of examples to demonstrate that even on the empirical level, the ICC's formulation can easily be shown to be totally bankrupt.

The ICC says: "In no way is the state of the transitional society the bearer of the revolution; it appears as the product of a certain balance of forces between the working class and other classes (...) Since it is the product of this state of affairs, it will tend to try to perpetuate this situation." (p.24) I.e., generally, society-in-itself 'secretes', to use this infamous ICC term, the state-in-itself. As we've just said, a thing-in-itself has its own laws (its nature) which it must obey. That the state-in-itself is said to be 'linked' to the economically dominant class cannot do away with this fact. Thus, by the very logic of its own premise, the ICC is forced to admit the minority's accusation that in its (the ICC's) formulation, "the state lives a life of its own, autonomous, unbelievably detached from the specific characteristics of the ruling class" (p.49): "having emerged from society /-in-itself/, it /the state-in-itself/ places itself above it, and constantly tends to conserve itself and become a force alien to society /-in-itself/" (p.74, emphasis added), or "the universal characteristics of this institution in all societies: the tendency for it to separate itself from, and raise itself above, society /-in-itself/". (p.61, emphasis added) Since society-in-itself includes the economically dominant class, by 'raising itself above' it, the state-in-itself must also be 'alien to' and 'separated from' the economically dominant class as well. I.e., in obeying its own laws, namely, conservatism, the state-in-itself's alleged 'link' with the economically dominant class becomes very tenuous indeed, if existent at all. Hence, the state-in-itself in turn is said to 'secrete' a stratum-in-itself: "its /the state-in-itself/ tendency to create a particular, parasitical organism--the bureaucracy". (p.61) That's why the ICC gives examples of how the state-in-itself 'defied' the revolutionary bourgeoisie. It may not be long before the ICC openly propounds a 'new class' theory.

We now turn to an empirical examination of the ICC's formulation. Only the blind, or those who turn their heads away when these historical facts are pointed out to them, can fail to recognize them. (9)

According to the ICC, while, for example, the bourgeoisie was once progressive, the state-in-itself was still conservative and 'defied' the bourgeoisie, because it "seeks to maintain an equilibrium, a stabilization of the relations between classes, relations which flow from the economic process itself" (p.11), or the "state's only reason for being is to codify and sanction an already existing economic state of affairs". (p.11) However, this assert-

ion has obviously been slapped on the face on innumerable occasions by history (even historical facts which, at first sight, seem to support the ICC's thesis, in fact, do not --see below). To give an example: did the new Roman constitution attributed to Tullius and the Athenian constitution attributed to Theseus merely "codify and sanction an already existing economic state of affairs"? Before these constitutions, differences in wealth did not at all bestow privileged political power, the latter was given to private property by the constitutions. I.e., the state did not just "seek to maintain... a stabilization of the relations between classes", it demolished the previous relations, more precisely, it overthrew the political expression of the previously existing relations of production instead. The ICC asserts "the whole of history shows that the state is always behind the development of the social base, never in advance of it" (p.66). If history has shown anything at all, it is precisely the opposite. The case of Japan cited by the minority is one example, which the ICC, as is usual, has not answered. But, no better example is provided than by Marx himself in Capital vol.1 in the chapter on primitive accumulation, especially the sections "Savage Legislation against the Expropriated from the End of the 15th Century Onwards" and "Acts of Parliament to force down Wages". How can these historical facts be explained by the "the state is conservative by nature" formulation? It is possible, of course, to find occasions on which the state was conservative vis-a-vis the revolutionary class (the ICC has cited some examples of the state during the French Revolution). But, do these examples support the ICC's assertion? Not as far as I can see. Firstly, the numerous examples of a progressive state clearly demonstrates the untenability of the ICC's thesis. That is why it has to run away from them, closing its eyes to make the world 'disappear'. Secondly, such examples, in fact, can be explained by the minority's thesis--they show nothing but the fierce resistance of feudal elements still present in the state (either ideologically or in the persons of actual state functionaries) against the revolutionary bourgeoisie which had not yet completely captured the state.

It surely is not addressing the issue for the ICC to make the following accusation: "Thus we are told that the state is a motor force in history [who has said this?]-in this upside-down theory the superstructure determines the economic base". (p.72) If this tactic--evading the opponent's main lines of thrust (because one is unable to reply to them) and distorting the opponent's view to make it appear absurd--so often used by the ICC's

leading theoreticians, sounds familiar, it is. It is precisely the tactic used by Lenin and Trotsky in their debate with the left-communists and the decists. For a recent illustration of this tactic, see FM's reply to Sander's text in IR 37. The ICC well knows that when Marx analysed how the state promoted the rise of the bourgeoisie, he was not saying that "the superstructure determines the economic base", why resort to the above tactic when it says the same thing in so many words itself: "Human thought and action is shaped by and shapes the material conditions of man's existence" (p.4, my emphasis)?

The resolution adopted by the ICC's 3rd Congress says: the task of the state "will be to codify, legalize and sanction an already existing economic order" (p.80). But, if the state is also given "the task of guaranteeing the advances of this transitional society" (ibid., my emphasis), these 'advances' being policies of revolutionizing the surviving capitalist relations, then it cannot at the same time merely be "codifying, legalizing and sanctioning an already existing economic order" which contains these surviving capitalist relations. I.e., the state must in fact be playing a progressive role by the ICC's own formulation. This glaring contradiction (no surprises, the ICC often contradicts itself without ever suspecting it--see footnote 1 under "Theoretical Degeneration" for another example) eloquently confirms the minority's position and disproves the ICC's. (Also see footnote 8 of the text "The Monolithism of the ICC" supra).

#### Footnotes:

1. Functionalism is the dominant methodology in bourgeois sociology and anthropology. Its point of departure is: how is it that society-in-abstract is able to form a cohesive entity? (Classes are abstracted away as not fundamental in the category society-in-abstract.) In answer, it compares society-in-abstract with a living organism, in which every part plays a functional role towards maintaining society-in-abstract's cohesive existence and survival, just as the heart, the lungs, etc are functional to the human body's cohesive existence and survival.

2. Different societies exhibit vastly different patterns of development, though all these patterns can adequately be explained by historical materialism. For example, in some societies slaves are generally only taken from conquered clans, in some others, slaves are taken from within the clan as well; in some societies, there is free landownership associated with slavery, in some others, state landownership is found instead; etc. For the sake of simplicity, I refer only to the particular studies



contained in Engels' Origins of the Family, Private Property & the State, referred to as Origins here, quotations are taken from the Foreign Language Press, Peking edition.

3. Matriarchy, understood as the counterpart of Patriarchy, has never been found, and probably never existed. This can easily be explained by reference to the position men occupy in production in early societies.

4. Anyone familiar with anthropological studies can tell that the state and classes are inseparable; where there are no classes, there is no state. This is admitted by professional bourgeois anthropologists, though various ideological explanations are proffered.

5. In early societies, members of the nobility were mostly military men, simply because slaves were taken through military conquest.

6. Even the earliest societies had a systematic social division of labour, mostly along sexual lines, for example, hunting being undertaken by men, wild fruit gathering by women. On the other hand, while private property and, therefore, exchange did not exist within an early society, they existed between different societies.

7. It should be mentioned that: a. antagonistic interests existed before classes arose, which were economic in nature, between different societies, for example, over strategic resources; b. in some early societies, rudimentary castes differing in status existed before classes arose. These existed in perfect harmony with the existent relations of production without 'dislocating the organic cohesion of the community'. The minority here refers to the ICC's minority.

8. To give another example: in positive economics, the real object money is directly the category money (-in-itself). In Marxist political economy, the category money is a phenomenal form of the category value which does not exist in the directly, sensorily experienced real object.

9. Facts can be interpreted in any number of ways, and cannot be employed as proof. (There is a detailed discussion on this point in the next text.) I produce the facts contained in this text, as in others, as illustrations; furthermore, the facts produced in this text can, as far as I can see, be interpreted otherwise, only by rejecting Marxism lock, stock & barrel. (The above applies equally well to the natural world, for eg, falling bodies (a fact) can be interpreted as possession by some 'falling spirit'.)

# CRITIQUE OF THE LEFT IN OPPOSITION

## AND RELATED PERSPECTIVES

The publication in IR 34 of my text on the Left in Opposition view requires the present follow-up, for three reasons: 1. that text's main theme was what I saw as the methodological mistake of the perspective's critiques, it did not deal with the errors of the ICC's own methodology (of which I was not totally aware then--strictly speaking, I was aware of it (see below), but did not think anyone could make such a blunder, until my discussions in Europe with the ICC changed my view), nor with my view of the soundness or unsoundness of the perspective itself, ie, its theoretical validity or falsity; 2. having spoken to numerous ICC comrades last summer, it is now my conclusion, as just mentioned, that many of them are indeed guilty of the methodological error their critics allege them to have committed; 3. some comrades in the milieu have mistaken my text as supportive of the ICC, consequently, I feel some clarification is necessary. As the Left in Opposition view, the conception of the consciousness of the bourgeoisie, and the historic course analysis are inextricably tied and stand and fall together, it is necessary to discuss them all in this text.

For the sake of clarity, let me briefly go over the theme of my previous text. At the risk of oversimplification, I summarized the criticisms of the Left in Opposition view which I was aware of as: the ICC says that capital now needs its left in opposition, but this suggests a conspiratorial view of history, according to which the bourgeoisie, responding to capital's needs, consciously pushes its left into opposition, this is a non-Marxist method, also let the ICC show us the evidence of this conspiracy. On this, I said: the Marxist method starts from the "dynamic of the... underlying relations" of capital (in this case, its needs at the present conjuncture), if this suggests that the bourgeoisie consciously pushes it left into opposition, so be it, and we should not, "as does the empiricist", bother about "whether evidence exists to catch the bourgeoisie red-handed in conspiracy."

It is now obvious that I did not make myself sufficiently clear. As I now see it, the point about evidence is still correct, but I ignored the methodological issue involved: the link between the analysis of capital's underlying

relations and the bourgeoisie's actions (the question of evidence derives from the latter), namely, the question of the bourgeoisie's consciousness of its own needs. There can, of course, be no doubt that the bourgeoisie is conscious of its own needs, but the question is, and I cannot overemphasize the importance of this, is this consciousness still bound by its own ideology, or does it attain the level of a Marxist materialistic understanding of history? For example, the bourgeoisie goes to war in response to capital's crisis because it sees the need to, but does it know its aim is to devalue capital? (As we've seen in the text on Luxemburg's pseudo-theory, the ICC, in fact, says it has to, for the falling rate of profit theory to be valid.) As I will try to show, the ICC takes this consciousness on the latter level, which gives rise directly to its conspiratorial and machiavellian view of history and the bourgeoisie respectively. It is this mistaken linking up of analysing capital's underlying relations and the bourgeoisie's actions that was seized upon by the critics. Unfortunately, the critics laid sole emphasis on the questions of conspiracy, machiavellianism, and, this being the fatal mistake, evidence, without 1. addressing the question of capital's underlying needs, which is what the ICC is trying to do, and without, therefore 2. seeing that the ICC's faulty method, as it were, a necessity imposed by its faulty historic course analysis, which, in turn, is premised upon an idealist method. To anticipate a little: according to the ICC, the course of history is either towards war or revolution; since the crisis is more than deep enough to require war, that war has not broken out can only be because the proletariat is not defeated; but the bourgeoisie desperately needs to solve the crisis of capital by going to war; therefore, the bourgeoisie needs to scheme and plot against the proletariat to remove the obstacle to war. I.e., the ICC's entire analysis reduces the present conjuncture to a battle of wits between two highly conscious classes. That is why it is necessary to deal with all the elements of the entire analysis. (1)

As said, the ICC sees the bourgeoisie as conscious of its own needs on the level of attaining a Marxist materialist understanding of history. (It has recently warned the milieu against this danger--a sign that, finally, it regains some sense--but, an empty warning is useless, it is necessary to follow through it in actual theoretical practice.) For example, it asserts that the pacifist 'campaigns' are created (2) by the bourgeoisie consciously in a machiavellian, conspiratorial way to derail the working class struggle. When I asked some comrades how is the bourgeoisie supposed to be able to know that pacifism (or, for that matter, the anti-nuclear movements, sundry anarchist

'populisms' etc), in which sundry leftists, who all profess their goal as the overthrow of capitalism, are active, is not going to endanger the capitalist system? As Marxists, we know that the proletariat is the only revolutionary class, but, how is the bourgeoisie supposed to be able to know this as well, and congratulating themselves on this knowledge, go about creating movements which they know will not endanger its system, but will only serve to derail the real revolutionary class, the proletariat from its struggles? Various answers have been given during my discussions with the ICC, such as:

- . The bourgeoisie knows because it controls these movements which are, afterall, its own creation. (A complete circle, isn't it?)  
Who is this 'it'? The bourgeoisie as a whole? In that case, the whole bourgeoisie are Marxists! But the question remains: how is the bourgeoisie able to become Marxists? Or only the 'big' bourgeoisie of the 'big' parties as the Democrats in the US? In that case, how is the 'big' bourgeoisie supposed to be able to know that the 'small' bourgeoisie, notably the leftists, who, as said, all profess to aim to overthrow capitalism and are conspicuously active in these 'campaigns', is not going to be able to rally increasing support and one day become strong enough to overthrow it? (Reply: it, ie, the 'big' bourgeoisie, knows because these movements, including the part in which the leftists are active, are so infiltrated by its agents (the FBI etc) that it knows it only has to "lock those fuckers /ie, the leftists/ up" to 'innoculate' (not a quote) them.) But, how is it that our omni-conscious 'big' bourgeoisie, ie, in this case mysteriously does not know the real class nature of the leftists? Isn't it precisely because the 'big' bourgeoisie has contradictions (though not class contradictions, as Marxists know) with the 'small' bourgeoisie that it infiltrates the latter with agents? And still the original question remains unanswered, for it is simply impossible to square a circle.
- . It knows through experience.  
I don't deny the capacity of the bourgeoisie to learn from experience, but becoming Marxists through experience?!

Thus, according to the ICC, the conflict in El Salvador is created by the US bourgeoisie, not to create a left in clandestinity (the ICC's latest creation), but to create the pacifist 'campaigns' in the heartlands of the US and Western Europe. I don't intend to sidetrack myself by going into the detailed arguments here; we only have to recall how, basing upon the same conspiratorial/mach-iavellian view of the bourgeoisie, the ICC asserted in

1979 that Nicaragua was handed over to the Sandinistas by....the US! (3)

In a letter to the ICC in 1982 (see my text in IR 34) I warned it against unawares (how dared I!) assuming that the bourgeoisie was able to overcome its own inner contradictions in their view. Nicaragua and El Salvador have just been mentioned. In a recent (summer 1983) ICC section meeting which I attended, a comrade argued that protectionism is also primarily a nationalist 'campaign' against the workers. (4) So, not only is the conspiratorial/machiavellian view of the bourgeoisie, which turns it into Marxists, not questioned, or at least reconsidered by going through its assumptions and logic in the face of such mounting criticism from the rest of the milieu, it has now become the sole starting point of each and every analysis (the left in clandestinity is an expression of this).

Let us now take a look at the logic of the ICC's various theories in question. It is as follows:

1. The course of history is towards either war or revolution. The crisis is already more than deep enough to have led to war, if not for the proletariat's obstacle.
2. To overcome this obstacle and, therefore, to be able to go to war, the solution that it desperately needs, the bourgeoisie, given its Marxist consciousness, knows that the proletariat is the obstacle, and knows, therefore, of the need to derail the working class. It attempts to do this by conspiratorially pushing the left into opposition, and creating ideological 'campaigns' against the working class.
3. If the left in opposition loses its credibility, and if the ideological 'campaigns' fail, the obstacles which are preventing the class consciousness of the proletariat from attaining full blossom will be gone, and fully conscious, the working class will rise in revolution. (5) The ICC does not say this in so many words, but this is the logic of its analysis.

It will be noted that together with the imputation of a Marxist consciousness into the bourgeoisie, 1. is the key link of the entire edifice, on which the whole of the latter is based. Our focus is, therefore, on it, while the analysis of 2. and 3. attempts to demonstrate on different levels the falsity of the ICC's theories.

The Course of History is Either Towards War or.....

This involves a couple of aspects:



a. The nature of the crisis: without going into the details of Luxemburgist crisis theory, let me just state that, despite assertions to the contrary, and notwithstanding efforts taken to 'account' for facts contradicting its economics, the ICC's view of the crisis is one of a sudden crash, at least as far as it is applied here. Thus in IR 15, the text "The Course of History" states: "Between the crisis of 1929 and the second world war, capitalism took 10 years.." to go to war. Even a cursory review of the economic history of the 30's shows us that the crisis did not begin and end in 1929, and, therefore, war was not on the immediate agenda in 1929, but was a slow process with ups and downs through the decade. To illustrate the ICC's total inability to understand the nature of capital's economic crisis, we only have to recall that in 1975, it 'predicted' the impossibility of any upturn, and just a few months ago, it branded signs of recovery in the US (I was writing this in August, 1983) as only so much propaganda of the bourgeoisie's conspiracy to 'guarantee' Kohl's election (see WR 59). (6) I don't want to sidetrack myself by economics; the point here is, instead of carefully examining the nature of crisis in general, and today's in particular, the ICC simply takes it for granted that the crisis today is already deeper than requiring war. (7)

b. More important than the above, however, is the ICC's view of the connection between crisis and war. After noting that "imperialist antagonisms... depend on the deepening of the crisis and don't originate in the action of the proletariat", the IR 15 text (p.3), as noted, nevertheless went on to assert that it took 10 years between 1929 and 1939 for the bourgeoisie to fight a war that was already required, and therefore on the immediate agenda in 1929. According to this view, then, history can, so to speak, be suspended in mid-air: the underlying dynamic of capital requires war, but the meeting of this need can be suspended for 10 years by the necessity to 'ideologically defeat' the working class and the necessity for the bourgeoisie to prepare for war militarily. Where, in this scenario, is the dynamic of capital's underlying dynamic to be found? The bourgeoisie, we are told, does not prepare for war as the crisis unfolds, but sees the need for war in a sudden crash, and then prepare for war! (More on this later).

What about the role of an undefeated proletariat in suspending history? According to the IR 18 text, the historic course is towards either war or revolution because "the two principle antagonistic classes in society can" not "go on preparing (8) their respective responses to the crisis--...--completely independently of each other" (p.17). This is certainly true. But, how does it 'prove'

that the historic course is only towards either war or revolution? The text has this to say: "The only moment when the bourgeoisie can attain unity at a world level, when it can silence its imperialist rivalries is when its very survival is threatened by its mortal enemy, the proletariat." (p.17) To 'prove' the point, the text cites 1871 (the collaboration between Prussia and the Versailles government) and 1918 (freeing of German soldiers by the Entente to crush the Spartacist uprising). These two solitary examples are supposed to have 'proved' the path to war and revolution are exclusive of each other. One only has to note that by the time these two collaborations were concluded, their respective wars had already been won by one side, ie, the war had already served its purpose, hence my emphasis on 'to' just now.

If we have shown the extreme shakiness of the 'proofs' on which the ICC bases its entire view (frankly, to quote facts as 'proofs' shows that it doesn't even know what constitutes a proof - see the addendum at the end), we still need to address the capability of an undefeated proletariat to suspend history, though the fact that the ICC has neither addressed this question itself (has it even suspected it?) or has only been able to resort to the above so-called 'proofs' could have relieved us from this onus. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that war was already necessary in 1975, today's 'equivalent' to 1929, but because of an undefeated proletariat, the bourgeoisie has been unable to fight the war it desperately needs. Yet, at the same time, the proletariat has not been revolutionary enough to make the insurrection. What happens, then? According to the ICC's view, if this state of affairs persists, history will be suspended indefinitely! So, instead of war or revolution, we, in fact, have a third historic course open, an indefinite stalemate between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, each 'preparing' its response to the crisis. It is possible for the ICC to argue that a long drawn-out stalemate will end in a defeat for the working class, though on the ICC's premise, I can see no reason why this can happen, and the course to war will then be open. But then, how are we supposed to understand the process of capital accumulation during the stalemate? For we originally started with the crisis as a sudden crash, opening up the way to war or revolution (either exclusively of each other or not doesn't matter here), then, however, we have a stalemate of say 100 years, finally the proletariat is beaten and war breaks out, answering to the need of 100 years ago. In other words, capital accumulation is said to have broken down 100 years ago (this is the definition of crisis in accordance with the ICC's view that war can come later than the requirements of the breakdown of

capital accumulation), now 100 years later, the solution to this breakdown finally has the chance to play itself out so that accumulation can be renewed--but, how did capital somehow get over those 100 years, during which it was supposed to have broken down already and did not have any lease of life for its renewal? To answer this question, one must return to the accumulation process during these 100 years, and the only way to do so is to analyse the crisis as a process, and not as a sudden crash 100 years ago.

History can only be understood in terms of the existing mode of production's underlying dynamic. This means that it can in no way be suspended. If capital's underlying dynamic (its accumulation) requires war, war will break out (the preparations for war are only manifestations of the maturing of the underlying need), unless the proletariat is already rising in revolution. If the proletariat sees the need for revolution, there will be revolution even at the height of a war. And when revolution does break out during a war, then, by definition, that war will be disrupted, not because the courses to war or revolution exclude one another, but simply because a bourgeoisie cannot have a proletariat which has expropriated factories for revolutionary purposes to be producing for the war at the same time. (Whether in such a case, an inter-imperialist collaboration results to crush the revolution, whether, if that happened, the war has accomplished its tasks, and what would happen if it has not, are different matters.)

For an example, we need only to look at the Russian experience on the outbreak of and during world war one. Mobilization took place in the midst of workers singing revolutionary songs and chanting 'Down With The War!'; inscriptions such as 'Comrades, we won't be any better off if Russia wins, they'll squash us even harder' appeared everywhere; but, the Russian bourgeoisie was still able to wage the war, and continue it despite, to mention only a few outstanding examples, the famous struggles of the Baltic Fleet workers in uniforms, the Petersburg January 1916 demonstration, the Gorlovka miners' unrest the same year (which resulted in their massacre--that's how the bourgeoisie actually responds to workers' resistance in its war preparation/conduction, not engineering ideological 'campaigns', more on this later), the Donets Basin strike the same year, etc. Finally, when the proletariat seized power in October, the war was disrupted immediately on Russia's part.

To conclude this part, in its view of the historic course

being towards only either war or revolution, its view that war does not necessarily break out even when needed by the crisis, its view that we are in such a stage today and its view that an undefeated-but-not-revolutionary-enough proletariat is capable of suspending history, if needs be, indefinitely, not only has the ICC not examined the validity of these views, which are only assumptions taken for granted, except on the odd occasion when two solitary examples are given as so-called 'proofs', I have shown them to be based upon an unmateriastic, ie, ideal-ist method.

### To Overcome /The Proletariat's/ Obstacle...

The need to push to left into opposition will be discussed in the following section.

The IR 18 text puts this most coherently:

- "\* in order for an imperialist war to break out, capitalism needs first to inflict a profound defeat on the proletariat--above all an ideological defeat, but also a physical one if the proletariat has shown a strong combativity (...);
- "\* this defeat must not just leave the class passive but must get the workers to adhere enthusiastically to bourgeois ideals (...)." (p.19)

(This is how the ICC 'argues' most of the time: 'must', 'must' & 'must'! Proofs? As we've seen elsewhere, the ICC is not in the habit of sharing its secret knowledges.) The text then went on to say that these 'ideals' must be defended by organizations having the confidence of the workers, and since, among other reasons, neither the Social-democrats nor the Communists can command such confidence any longer today ("Their anti-proletarian function is clear and has been recognized by many workers", p. 20), the historic course today is, therefore, towards revolution. Interesting, isn't it, an argument which argues against the Left in Opposition perspective is used to argue in favour of its other side, the course is towards revolution view. This is, of course, no surprise, we've seen that self-contradictions are a registered trademark of the ICC.

Let's look at a so-called 'proof' cited by the text to support its thesis:

"Thus, at the beginning of the 20th century there were many threats of imperialist war, many opportunities for unleashing a generalized war (the Russo-Japanese war, Franco-German conflicts over Morrocco, Balkans conflicts, invasion of the Tripolitaine by Italy).

The fact that these conflicts didn't generalize was to no small extent linked to the fact that, up until 1912, the working class (through mass demonstrations) and the International (special motions at the Congresses of 1907 and 1910, Extraordinary Congress on the question of war in 1912) mobilized themselves each time there was a local conflict. And it wasn't until the working class, anaesthetized by the speeches of the opportunists, stopped mobilizing itself against the threat of war (between 1912 and 1914) that capitalism was able to unleash an imperialist war, starting with an incident (the Sarajevo assassination) which seemed much less serious than the previous ones." (p.21) (9)

Had the 2nd International suddenly become opportunistic only in 1912? And why, if it had in fact? And if it had in fact, how was it that a militant internationalist proletariat could just as suddenly have been "anaesthetized by the speeches of the opportunists"? (Since we all know the party does not make the class.) The plain truth is there was never any 1912 turning point, after which the bourgeoisie, through the suddenly degenerating 2nd International, unleashed an ideological 'campaign' against a hitherto fighting working class, which was subsequently defeated ideologically, thereby opening up the path to war, a path not open prior to 1912, though war had been a necessity as early as 1904. The Russian example has just been given. For another, the SPD had always "supported German foreign policy on all decisive questions" (10), and its 'Marxist Centre' had always sown pacifist illusions about the non-inevitability of war. While at the Bureau of the Workers' International's meeting in Brussels on July 29-30, 1914 (in response to the imminent outbreak of world war one), even Guesde was able to ask V. Adler: "And the workers' front?" Further, following the Bureau's meeting, a great rally of worker in the thousands, assembled in and around the Cirque Royal chanting "They won't dare to do it; and even if they should, we have the International!" as Jaures and others struck up internationalist exhortations. (11) I do not pretend that these examples actually prove my case (see the addendum at the end), but, at the very least, they demonstrate the hollowness of the ICC's, resting entirely, as it does, on the alleged fact of a suddenly degenerating 2nd International.

Let's return to basics. Is it necessary for war to be waged to have the proletariat profoundly defeated ideologically to the degree that it adheres "enthusiastically to bourgeois ideals"? (12)

We all agree that the ruling ideology is the ideology of



the ruling class. This means that so long as the proletariat fails to see the need for revolution, it remains under the ruling ideology. Thus, war can be mobilized (15) so long as the proletariat fails to see the need for revolution and putting that into practice, for in such a case, the proletariat is, by definition, already ideologically defeated. The Russian experience quoted above gives a good illustration. War was waged despite the presence of significant enthusiastically internationalist elements in the proletariat, which, however, fell short of seeing the need for revolution and putting that into practice. Thus, not only is it not so that the ideological "defeat must not just leave the class passive", it is already enough to have a proletariat which fails to reach revolutionary levels.

As the crisis unfolds, it inevitably leads to workers's resistance. The bourgeoisie will meet these resistances as they come. We all agree that these resistances can only end in defeat for the working class before the revolution comes. That's exactly it. The bourgeoisie meets these resistances as they come, and depending on the combativity of the workers, crushes them more or less violently. These defeats, by themselves, already provide the best economic, ideological (seeing the hopelessness of struggle, for example) and physical demoralization. On the other hand, it is, of course, possible that the defeats eventually lead to revolutionary consciousness (which, as it happened in the last revolutionary wave, may only come when war has already begun, though the chances of this being successful, if it did happen, in the next world war, seems pretty slim, but that is another question), but until this day comes, there's no stopping the bourgeoisie going to war. It is, of course, best for the bourgeoisie to prevent this possibility by having the proletariat so profoundly defeated ideologically that it adheres "enthusiastically to bourgeois ideals", but, aside from the consciousness question, what's best is not the same as what's necessary.

It is, as said, enough for the bourgeoisie that the proletariat is non-revolutionary to be able to wage war. Such a proletariat will willy-nilly troop to the factories and produce for the war. If it rises on occasional resistance, it will be crushed as the Russian proletariat was during 1915 and 1916, and unless it rises in revolution, the war goes on. In my discussions with some ICC comrades, I asked whether the British proletariat was or was not mobilized during the Falklands war. The answer was the majority was indifferent. Isn't that it?

As to the so-called ideological 'campaigns' the bourgeois-

ie is supposed to be consciously waging against the proletariat, it needs only be added, on top of what's already been said, that nationalism, a major plank in these so-called 'campaigns', is 'natural' to the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie 'instinctively' knows that nationalism is in its interests and whips it up at every opportunity, and at any time (an international football match, launching of a spaceship, etc., etc.)

### If the Left Loses its 'Credibility'...

The question of the ideological 'campaigns' has already been discussed.

That is why, the ICC says, it's so important for the bourgeoisie to push its left into opposition. If this assumption held, revolution would have been much easier than it actually is. But, unfortunately, we all know the gulf separating losing confidence in the system and seeing the need and possibility to overthrow it and establish something totally new. The former can just as well, in fact, in most cases, lead to utter demoralization. The trouble with the ICC's theory is that, starting from the faulty assumption that war has for a long time been a necessity, the logic of this and other assumptions pushes it to conclude that if removed of the 'contamination' of the so-called ideological 'campaigns', the 'pure' class consciousness of an undefeated proletariat will rapidly blossom into the revolution. An attractive picture indeed, but, unfortunately, belongs to the realm of historical fiction of the likes of Tolstoy's War & Peace.

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Was fascism consciously created to ideologically defeat the working class? And that in order that the war required in 1929 could be waged, eventually in 1939? In my previous text, I said questions of the kind of the former, though perfectly legitimate, fail to tackle the issues the ICC is trying to address on a genuinely theoretical level. (14) I now realize my mistake in ignoring the methodological issue that is indeed involved, namely, the 'consciousness' question as the link between an analysis of capital's need and the actions of the bourgeoisie. This text, however, still maintains that an adequate critique of the Left in Opposition view must address the assumptions giving rise to it. What this means, it is now clear, is that such a critique must only be part of an overall critique of all the related perspectives. This is what I have tried to do in the present text, and

hope to have accomplished.

As a final word, I must mention that I agree with the ICC in one sense, though only in this one sense, that unlike the 30's, the prospects of revolution are much better today (some of the arguments the ICC uses to support their historic course view are, in themselves, valid.) Despite Poland (a physical, economic and ideological defeat), etc. the working class has not yet been defeated like it was in the 30's.

August, 1983

Addendum (August, 1984):

Let me summarize the fundamental questions that the ICC has to answer.

1. Only by taking the bourgeoisie as capable of attaining a Marxist understanding of capitalism and history can any talk of the pacifist, nationalistic, etc. 'campaigns' being 'created' consciously for the purpose of ideologically defeating the not-yet-revolutionary-but-undefeated working class in order to remove the obstacle to war make any sense. This is a methodological question.

2. Theoretically, it is the ICC's course of history view that gives rise to the left in opposition view, with the above methodological issue providing the other condition. This historic course view is itself based upon three methodological assumptions: a. that the solution, war, to the breakdown of capital accumulation can come many years after that breakdown; b. that capital accumulation which has already broken down can somehow continue to proceed in perhaps a 'frozen state' in the meantime; c. that the will of a not-yet-defeated-but-not-yet-revolutionary-either proletariat is capable of suspending history, if needs be, indefinitely. Needless to say, these three assumptions are premised upon an idealist method. If the ICC wishes to defend its theory, these assumptions must be defended methodologically, not merely made and that unconsciously.

As we've seen earlier (refer to the ICC's 16.5.84 letter to me, supra), the ICC says my text "contains the conventional empiricist arguments." I have indeed given examples. Marx also gives examples in Capital. (Doesn't the ICC itself also give examples: such as the Bermondsey by-election, etc.?) What constitutes empiricism is a. to refer to facts, ie, to give examples, without a theory built upon a methodology; b. to employ facts as 'proofs'. Let me deal with the former first. Marx gives

examples in Capital to illustrate a theory (the labour theory of value) built upon a materialist method (the distinction between form and content - the bourgeois counterpart to this is positivism) applied to an object (capitalist production). (In contrast, the ICC gives examples to illustrate a theory (the left in opposition, etc) built upon a method of which it is itself unconscious.) Thus, to reply to the present text, it is the above questions that have to be answered, and not to interpret the examples given otherwise - facts can always be interpreted in any number of ways. This brings us to the second point. The examples given by Marx in Capital do not prove his theory. The theory is proven by its own criteria. That the theory is scientific is because its method is materialistic, and because its object derives from a scientific premise

(see footnote 1 in the section on 'Organization Degeneration'.)(15)The examples in Capital are illustrative, they can be interpreted in countless other ways. (In contrast, the ICC has never sought to prove its own theories theoretically by employing an explicit method - how is it supposed to be able to do so when it is itself unconscious of its own method? - but instead seeks to employ facts as so-called 'proofs' - because the ICC only either employs facts or imperatives (the 'musts'), we can only take it that the ICC actually means the facts to be 'proofs'.) For Marxists, the history of the 20th-century and the anthropological findings since Marx's time, are stunning confirmations of Marx's theory. But they can be interpreted otherwise as well, and to prove that such interpretations are incorrect, what's needed is not to interpret them in one's own way, but to criticize the method underlying these other interpretations. (With appropriate modifications, the above applies to the natural sciences just as well.)

#### Footnotes:

1. It will be seen that the thread that ties these various perspectives together is none other than the idealist method.

2. 'Created' is the correct word. In its 5th Congress, two proposed amendments to the resolution on the International Situation which proposed to amend the original draft to the effect of laying stress on the use made of the pacifist movements etc by the bourgeoisie were voted down.

3. May be now the ICC wants to change that view. Or may be it will incorporate Nicaragua's present role as part of the bourgeoisie's plan in 1979, according to which pacifist 'campaigns' would be necessary today?

4. Admittedly, we won't see a repeat of the protectionist drama of the 30's due to the formation of the two imperialist blocs. But protectionism is still a manifestation of capital's crisis. The accompanying nationalism being whipped up is another matter to be dealt with below.

5. Or 'class confrontations', as the ICC now, after the 5th Congress, redefines its perspective, for revolution is not guaranteed.

6. We must, of course, be careful in analysing the current upturn in the US, ie, how much of it is real, how much fictitious, in terms of capital accumulation, and not simply GNP figures. (Note: this is an original August, 1983 note.)

7. For a feeble attempt to analyse this question, in a few sentences, see the text "The Historic Course" in IR 18, p.20. As to the recent graphs in IR and elsewhere, the reader doesn't need reminding that they do not constitute any analysis at all.

8. Does the proletariat 'prepare' for revolution a la the bourgeoisie's preparation for war? Ie, does the revolutionary consciousness of the proletariat develop in an accumulative manner? However, it is, of course, possible for the ICC to define 'preparing' in another way. Addendum (August, 1984): It seems that the ICC does, if only unconsciously, hold the view that revolutionary consciousness develops in a slow, steady, accumulative manner. Take a look at their latest article 'defending' their course of history view in IR 36: "It is true that, from an objective standpoint, the economic crisis exacerbates the antagonisms between social classes, and between rival capitalist powers. But whether one or the other of those antagonisms comes to a head depends in the last instance on one and the same factor: proletarian practice and consciousness. Why, the reader may ask.

Here is the answer: 'obviously', as the ICC go on to 'argue', the objective dynamic of inter-imperialist antagonisms 'can' be suspended by the proletariat's not-yet-revolutionary-but-'undefeated' consciousness; what's objective about it in that case?/... The state of mind, the consciousness of a class ready to overthrow the capitalist social order and build a new society is radically different from that of workers atomized, broken, 'identified with' their ruling class to the point where they accept slaughtering each other on the battlefield... The working class cannot be in these two mutually exclusive states of mind simultaneously. True,



in itself, cf. my comments in this section of the text; but, from here the ICC, as is usual, without any theoretical support whatsoever at all, make a leap into.../ the processes leading to one or other of these situations are also mutually exclusive. /As though revolutionary consciousness accumulates like compound interest!/ The process that leads to a revolutionary outcome is characterized by the proletariat's increasing disengagement from the grip of the dominant ideology and the development of its consciousness and combativity; in contrast, the process that leads towards war is expressed in the workers' growing adherence to capitalist values... These two are thoroughly different, antagonistic, mutually exclusive processes." (p.15) One cannot help but 'admire' the simplicity with which the ICC 'argue' their case, that is, if they do stand up to do so, which they often do not do. As will be noted, aside from employing facts as so-called 'proofs', they only employ imperatives (blank statements being a mild variety of imperatives). "They make pronouncements", that's how an American comrade, an early sympathizer of the ICC, put it to me recently.

9. The same suspension of history thesis is, inevitably, apparent.

10. Frölich, P. Rosa Luxemburg, Pluto, 1972, p. 166.

11. See *ibid.*, pp. 201-2.

12. That this did happen in the 30's was exactly the reason why Bilan was able to analyse the historic course so accurately.

13. Mobilization for war doesn't only mean conscripting soldiers, but also getting production on a war footing, ie, producing primarily for war. Thus, it's wrong for some ICC critics to say that the ICC has an outdated view of trench warfare for the third world war when it talks about mobilization of the proletariat for war.

14. For example, the text "ICC:Marxist Contradictions" in the CB no. 4, whose excellent first part (up to the end of the section "SDP Capitalist Construct"), though vividly demonstrating the absence of any theoretical rigour on the part of the ICC, nevertheless, still fails to disprove the ICC's thesis on a methodological and theoretical level.

15. Vulgar economy and positive economics have a different object, which is not capitalist production, but is what is generally referred to as the allocation of resources, or, to use Marx's words, "the semblance of

the interrelations of bourgeois production" (Capital 1), which is an ideological object.

## THE ICC'S LETTER (CIRCA 7.84)

It is well-known that in a debate, the party which finds it necessary to resort to, and does resort to insults, is the party which does not have any argument at all. It is also well-known that when a person tells one lie, he'll have to continue to tell lies to cover it up. Similarly, when in a debate, one party starts resorting to insults, because it does not have an argument, it will find it necessary to continue to resort to insults.

The following is the ICC's reply to my letter of 25.5.84. It will find its due place in revolutionary history. There is a Chinese saying: "Respect is given by others. Honour is thrown away by oneself." The ICC has already done its part. I trust the milieu will not hesitate to do its.

LLM August, 1984

"Dear LLM,

In reply to your letter of 25 May, we'd like to make the following points:

1. In answer to point one, about Aberdeen: it is your basic standpoint that is flawed. That is, you are trying to occupy some kind of middle ground between our organization, which, for all its weaknesses, is the most advanced embodiment of revolutionary class consciousness today [don't laugh!], and those who have, for whatever motives, thrown themselves into the task of destroying it. But in our 'difference' with Aberdeen, not only is there no middle ground: to try to hold the centre, like all other forms of centrism, ends up apologizing for open opportunism and gangsterism. Let us state it baldly:

- on the matter of actively defending the proletariat's most precious organizational acquisition, the ICC [cut out your grin!], from theft and threats to involve the police, no compromise. You are either with us and our actions of class violence or you are with the Cheniers and their craven apologists in Aberdeen;

- on the matter of openly and publically defending the milieu against elements like Chenier [let us all say 'Thank you!'], no compromise. You are with us and our communique or you cover for Aberdeen's campaign of slander and defamation against the ICC and in defence of Chenier, none of which they have repudiated, despite the subsequent confirmation [the reader will commit sacrilege to regard

this as a posteriorism<sup>7</sup> of everything we said about this shady element;

- in the confrontation between the positions of the ICC and those of the Chenier tendency, you are either with us or against us in defending Marxism against their opportunist deviations on the union and other questions and their open slide into libertarian attacks on the principle of centralization. On this issue, it was Aberdeen who began as centrists - not, of course wholly embracing the positions of elements who were already working hand in glove with Solidarity types, but, precisely at the time when the real issue was centralization versus libertarianism, concentrating all their fire on the 'bureaucratic' central organs of the ICC, on the dangers of monolithism, etc. Since the real enemy was councilism and anti-centralization, all Aberdeen's verbal proclamations about being in favour of centralization were no more than a cover for the more open opponents of centralized revolutionary work.

As you say, Aberdeen have since made a number of other verbal proclamations about how naughty they were. But in our opinion they have made no serious attempt to understand or explain the roots of their errors (why mince words - their scabbing), nor any practical effort to demonstrate a real change of attitude (such as returning what they owe us, for example). In fact, for them to do any of this now would undermine their very reason for existing."

1. My criticisms of the ICC stand on their own, as the reader can judge for himself from the above texts, and I do not intend to be played into the tactic of the ICC by being diverted away from these criticisms into the ICC's mud-throwing game over the Chenier affair. Readers can judge for themselves from what I did say in my letter of 25.5.84, whether I am trying to 'hold the centre'. I've condemned the Aberdonians for threatening to call the police (the CB no. 5, p.18). As to the other issues involved in the Chenier affair, I am not prepared to draw any definite conclusions, since, as I've noted already (ibid., p. 18), my investigation into the matter when in Europe no more than scratched its surface. Lest the milieu mistake that only the ICC is the plaintiff, I've heard from a third party, to name just one example, that the ICC smashed up property they knew belonging to an ex-member who was not involved in the affair at all. On the other hand, this being of supreme importance, the ICC talks as though the political questions that I and some

other comrades in the milieu such as EM as well as many of its own members (refer to my earlier comment on the debate on minority rights during the ICC's 5th Congress) have raised were not involved in the Chenier affair. By this I'm not saying I support the Tendency's actions, I, as said, simply do not have enough information, nor, for the same reason, am I saying I support the ICC's. But let me draw a parallel concerning the involvement of these political questions in the affair, to show why the milieu cannot take what the ICC chooses to say about it at face value. Armed with irrefutable historical facts, I, for one, support the local soviets' defiance of central authorities such as Vesenkha(\*) during 1971-21, because the latter were in the act of destroying the Paris Commune Principle, ie, smashing the proletariat's dictatorship. Though before the state of siege in Petrograd & Kronstadt, the central authorities could still be regarded as proletarian, they were systematically destroying the proletariat's dictatorship, ie, stripping themselves of their proletarian nature. It takes a leftist to call defiance of them 'scabbing'. If what I've just said were 'anti-centralist', 'libertarian' etc, then I'm not a centralist. Neither were the Petrograd workers, nor the Kronstadters. But enough. As said, my criticisms of the ICC stand on their own. We will shortly see how the ICC 'replies' to them.

"We thus consider ourselves fully justified in refusing to consider them as our comrades. The point you raise about the PCInt only demonstrates that you haven't understood the issue at all. If a comrade in the ICC began to talk about working in the unions or critically supporting national liberation we would discuss the issue until it was resolved or organizational separation became unavoidable. But any comrade who stole from us or involved the police in our affairs would be expelled at once with no discussion."

2. Here's a classic example of how the ICC evades an opponent's point. The PCInt are not beginning to talk about working in the unions, etc. They participated in the partisans, initiated a united front from above attempt, etc.

"Aberdeen have expelled themselves from the milieu and have joined the ranks of the lumpen proletariat. It will take more than a few half-hearted and hypocritical decl-

\* Since the criticism of Vesenkha is a hobbyhorse of libertarians, this note of clarification is necessary: I criticize it not because it replaced local autonomy, ie, federalism by central planning, but because it was an appointed machinery, usurping the power of the soviet system. Here I may mention, incidentally, a point which seems to have largely gone unrecognized: the state in 1917 was from the very beginning, to a very large extent, a miscarriage of the commune-state. (Cf. footnote 5, pp. 90-91, infra.)

arations to get them back into the revolutionary movement. On this issue we refer you to the article 'Gangsters Looking for Respectability' in WR 71 and to a letter from a former member of the Chenier tendency in the next WR."

3. Since the ICC has put this to me personally, let me, against my intention not to get sidetracked by it, say a word about the text in WR 71. Assuming (see 1. above) that the ex-ICC member now in the CBG did act improperly, what's the essence of the ICC's point? Simply this: look at what he did in the past, can we take him and his colleagues seriously now? According to this logic, MC & the ICC should never have been taken seriously at all. The reader will see shortly that my past is not spared either.

"None of this implies that we refuse to discuss with you. We will certainly warn you against your present trajectory but you are not yet at the stage of organizational fusion with the CBG. We will continue to send you material for the bookshops (and still await the money you owe us) and your own copies of our press, as soon as you renew your subscription (as we pointed out in the last letter).

2. You take offence against our assertion that you haven't broken from libertarianism. [Did I? Or was I, instead, pointing out to the ICC that it was not enough to make a blank assertion? Stop distorting!] But this is not just a 'label' [the letter now gets really interesting]: it is an assessment based on our experience with you in Europe and your subsequent written reaction. Despite all your nominal agreement with the principle of centralization, your basic concern, all your passion and interest (especially after seeing a real [don't laugh!] centralized organization at work), centred round the rights of individuals and minorities and the dangers of bureaucracy."

4. Firstly: "all" my "passion and interest...": The reader may be led to think that I talked about nothing else, either in Europe or afterwards. My text on the Left in Opposition etc above shelved by the ICC for 1 whole year now is enough testimony. But let me tell the reader more. When I was in London, where my main discussions with the ICC were to take place, I brought up, amongst other issues, the questions of the state & economics. I had virtually no discussion on the former because the writer of this letter, CDW, told me he "got lost over the details of my arguments" contained in my letter of 31.5.83 which was intended to serve as a basis for the discussion. I had a short discussion with the same CDW on Luxemburg's theory. (When I was with the ICC in London, I stayed at CDW's place, who was



the person mainly responsible for discussing with me.) When I brought up the fundamental contradiction of Luxemburg's theory (see question 1 of the relevant text, supra), I got no reply. When, sensing that he did not understand Grossmann's theory (more precisely, how the falling rate of profit causes overproduction), I tried to explain it to him, using some hypothetical figures. He cut the discussion short by apologizing that he was "not good at figures." I held discussions with the same CDW as well as many other comrades from various sections during the Congress on various questions, such as the Left in Opposition view, as is evident from the relevant text above.

Secondly: I was and am concerned about minority rights and bureaucracy within the ICC, and with passion as well as interest. But to say I was and am concerned about individual rights is a pure fabrication. Just take a look at what I said to the ICC: "positions on any question are not individual positions; on any question, there are not 1,001 /individual/ positions, but only several orientations." (See "The Monolithism of the ICC", supra) It is the ICC, who regard an organization as composed of unique individuals, and who think that to overcome this, it needs to take an organizational position on all non-programmatic issues. For Marxists, April Theses, for example, was indeed the work of one individual, but it did not spin out from Lenin's unique mind alone. Even if a certain position is held only by one individual (Lenin was in such a position in April, 1917), that position is not an individual position of that unique person, and to defend the rights that 'his' position be debated by the class, is not an individualistic defence of individual rights. By making up this fabrication, the purpose of which, as will be seen immediately, is to state, as is usual, without argument, that I am a petty-bourgeois liberal individualist, it is the ICC who betray an atomistic view of society composed of unique individuals.

"For us, your response, your susceptibility to the sweet nothings of Aberdeen, was a classic expression of the 'fear of factory discipline' characteristic of the individualistic petty bourgeoisie, whose starting point is always the individual /mine or theirs?, not the collective. As Lenin summed it up in One Step Forward, Two Steps Back: (I don't want to waste space for this long quotation, it is the infamous passage about workers, being trained by capitalist factory discipline, can easily acquire discipline

and organization, while bourgeois intellectuals fear the party as a factory. --Let's see whether the next passage the ICC quotes is this one from What Is To Be Done?: "All members...must regard themselves as agents of the /central/ committee...to observe all 'laws & customs' of this 'army in the field'...which they cannot leave without permission of the commander.") Throughout the ICC's existence we have been struggling against the persistence of such attitudes within our own ranks, but we do have the organizational and political framework to wage this struggle. /Say what you like, as in fiction/ Do you really think, comrade, that you, an isolated individual with no experience of the 'factory' of a marxist political organization, are immune from such attitudes? No: whatever progress you have made, the break is by no means complete, and is definitely being jeopardized by your present course.

You are dead right to point to your Marxologue past. As with your libertarian hangovers, this is rooted in individualism, an incapacity to grasp the collective nature of proletarian thought and action."

5. If I were to tell the ICC more about my past, such as I was a patriotic liberal-democrat before I was a Marxologue, or I was born to an anti-CCP, pro-KMT father, that certainly would have furnished them with more 'arguments' against my present political positions. When have the ICC become a bunch of Freudian political psychoanalysts? I have no doubt that the ICC 'genuinely' "defend & desire.....open confrontation of positions". This letter is three-page long. And they surely have produced a string of 'forceful arguments': "an isolated individual.."; "your Marxologue past"; "your libertarian background". Don't dare think that these are just mere labels, mere assertions, if the reader doesn't see the arguments-in-themselves (a thing-in-itself is something unknowable), then he must (the ICC-registered imperative, of course) be a petty-bourgeois, fearing the factory discipline of the collective. The recalcitrant reader may enquire what's happened to my invitation to the ICC, contained in my letter of 25.5.84, to discuss the issues raised in the text "Is The ICC Tending Towards Monolithism?" Well, is it not enough to seal my political death warrant by condemning my past and isolation in a Freudian political psychoanalysis?

"And the fact that you haven't broken from 'Maxology' either is demonstrated in your curious idea that you have finally achieved the task of 'theoretically proving the capitalist nature of the USSR'".

6. This invective is in response to the following passage of my 25.5.84 letter: "Finally, a few words on my current activities.... to write [a text] on the capitalist nature of the 'socialist' countries; as an American contact whom I met recently in Hong Kong told me, and this has always been my view, neither you, nor the CWO have been able to, using Marxist political economy, prove their capitalist nature theoretically; my text aims precisely to do that." This text has turned out to be a lengthy analysis. A brief outline of its line of argument can be found in this issue of International Correspondence. The reader who has investigated the matter in depth will see that using Marxist political economy to prove the capitalist nature of the 'socialist' countries, is not an academic exercise (how can any Marxist theoretical work be academic?), but is directly related to the understanding and definition of the economic programme for the period of transition. The CWO did make one such attempt (see their "Theories of State Capitalism" reprinted in RP 19), but failed almost totally. As to the ICC, well, isn't it enough merely to assume?

"There is a basic problem of the Marxist method here, and one that has appeared in many of your assertions and arguments. /Let's put the record straight, I don't make assertions in arguments. I do make blank statements (such as the one about the CWO just now) which are not central to my arguments, and on which I'm prevented from expanding by the context./ For us Marxist theory is the product of the collective experience of the class and the collective reflection of organized revolutionaries. For you, it seems in essence to be a question of clever individuals..."

7. I assume by 'organized revolutionaries' the ICC means a revolutionary organization. So, what the ICC is saying here is that only members of such organizations can produce Marxist theory. Between 1852 and 1864, Marx was an 'isolated individual' belonging to no revolutionary organization. So, the reader can burn A Contribution..., Grundrisse, etc, because according to the ICC, they could not have been products of Marxist theory. During the period 1861-1863, during which Marx wrote the draft for all 4 volumes of Capital (much of which enters directly into the published versions, and for volume 4, the published version is the draft itself), he, according to the ICC, could not have produced Marxist theory. Enough of this. Let's put it bluntly: the ICC here is telling all members of the milieu who

do not belong to a group, that they cannot possibly produce Marxist theory, which implies that their role is only to be taught by those who can; it is only when they have graduated from this training course, got their certificate by joining an existing organization, that they can begin to produce Marxist theory. This further implies that they, before graduation are, by definition, members of the bourgeoisie, since, divorced from the collective experience of the class, the bourgeois camp is the only other place they can belong to. On the other hand, the ICC is also saying that individuals are indeed unique individuals ('clever' or not), if they do not belong to a group. (Cf. second part of point 4 above.) There really "is a basic problem of the Marxist method here, and one that has appeared in many of" the ICC's "assertions and 'arguments'."

".. wielding 'Marxist political economy' (which incidentally does not exist).."

8. An old Chinese parable says: "The summer insect is unable to talk about ice. Not that there is no ice, but that it has not seen ice." I don't intend to guess what the ICC understands by the area of investigation (I'm afraid the word 'subject' sounds too 'academic' or 'Marxologue-like' to the ICC--you see, the ICC believes that by having a different conception of a thing, the thing itself can be changed (see the first text, supra).--On second thought, 'area of investigation' must also be unsatisfactory, the ICC believes class consciousness does not and can not investigate any area other than the proletariat itself - see the comment concerning the ICC's understanding of science and class consciousness, supra) political economy. Marx himself certainly tells us that he was founding a Marxist political economy: "My enquiry led me to the conclusion that neither legal relations nor political forms could be comprehended whether by themselves or on the basis of a so-called general development of the human mind, but that on the contrary they originate in the material conditions of life...; that the anatomy of this civil society, however, has to be sought in political economy." (Preface)

Another example: Is labour-power a politico-economic category founded by Marx to analyse the bourgeois relations of production or not?

"...to 'prove', in magnificent isolation, issues that have in any case been settled decades ago."

9. "settled decades ago"? Why, then, have the ICC not in its 10 years of existence cared to give us one single text formally showing us the capitalist nature of the 'socialist' countries by summarizing

the arguments that have been 'settled decades ago'? Did not Mattick, in his later years, deny that the USSR etc were capitalist? For the ICC, as said, it is enough merely to assume. Even worse, what the ICC is implying here, as will become evident immediately, is that trying to prove the capitalist nature of the 'socialist' countries in an adequate way in terms of Marxist political economy, is a pure 'academic' exercise. No wonder it understands not one bit about the transitional economic programme. Nor wonder it has re-invented, without knowing it itself, Kautsky's category 'value-in-itself'. No wonder it has smuggled in, again without knowing it itself (incidentally, it was Freud who founded the category the unconscious), the category money-in-itself from positive economics. No wonder it has repudiated Marx's value theory (in saying the labour time certificate is 'just another form of money'), once again, without knowing it itself. What evidence there is suggests that, for the ICC, it is unconsciousness that makes the revolution.

"3. On our 'unwillingness to defend our positions'. Please, comrade, retain some sense of your own importance. We do not have infinite time at our disposal to answer every point you raise, especially when we consider that entering into certain debates with you at this time will only reinforce your academic inclinations. We certainly cannot 'dictate' what people will discuss with us, but we do have our own conceptions of what constitutes a priority. Whether they are intervening in workers' assemblies or debates between revolutionaries, marxists have to develop the capacity to steer discussions away from secondary fixations and onto the essential. From the standpoint of marxology, for whom all things are equally interesting /I didn't know that when I was a Marxologue/, such an attitude no doubt smacks of philistinism or a refusal to discuss. But for us it is an aspect of what it means to be in the vanguard of the development of consciousness."

10. May I advise everybody in the milieu that they should "retain some sense of their own importance" vis-a-vis the "vanguards of the development of consciousness"? Which means that there is no use for them to raise points for discussion with the ICC, since they are not in the position to know whether the points they raise are, afterall, not 'essential', a 'secondary fixation' (you see, even a topic that many comrades in the milieu consider programmatic even now, viz., the question of the state, can, our 'divine vanguards' teach us, be a 'secondary fix-



ation'). You see, though our 'vanguards' are 'divine', they do not "have infinite time at their disposal" to teach you why the points you raise are 'stupid'. Especially since you are not the one to judge, for you are human, not in the position to produce Marxist theory, whether "certain debates" can "only reinforce your" 'stupidity'. Don't dare think for one single second that this "smacks of philistinism or a refusal to discuss", it is not, because your role is to be taught. Don't dare fool yourself for one single second that this is because the 'divine vanguards' are unable to reply to your criticisms, that would be blasphemy. Got it?

"We now feel that the issue of organization is so paramount for you that there can be no real progress on the other questions unless certain breakthroughs take place on this issue. /Let me put the record straight: there are a few other questions which are as, probably more important than the question of organization, not for me alone, but for the class as a whole./ That is why we reaffirm our belief that future correspondence between us should focus on this question."

11. Don't be joking, 'vanguards of the development of consciousness'. You see, even when a topic is deemed by your Holiness to be a 'priority', that doesn't mean specific points within the topic are necessarily of 'priority' from your 'divine' point of view. For example, the points that I raised in the text "Is The ICC Tending Towards Monolithism?", which I now understand cannot be a product of Marxist theory (nor can any thing that I say in public or in correspondence with you, for that matter), are obviously, at best, 'secondary fixations', while my past (my father's past as well?) is obviously 'essential', 'of priority'. No, your Holiness, I won't make a fool of myself anymore.

"If you believe there are other burning issues to discuss you should raise them.."

12. To make a bloody fool of myself, your Holiness?

"...- if possible in a form that makes rapid and reasonably short answers possible. But in any case, since you are now embarking on a public critique of the ICC, it is likely that much of the future debate between us will take place in public also."

13. Let's hope my father's past will not be dragged into the matter, if the debate does materialize.

"And at this level we will not necessarily be restricted to the question of organization, though we will certainly explain to the outside world..."

14. Let's hope not with arguments-in-themselves and the ICC-registered imperative. Let's also hope it would not be an excursion into psychology.

".. why we think it is your main problem (and not only yours, of course).

Concerning your text: we have tried for a long time to fit it in with our publishing schedules. But we are not a publishing house: here again we have our own priorities."

15. Is my text, dealing as it does with most of the perspectives (the Left in Opposition, etc) currently animating the entire ICC's press, a 'secondary fixation'? - Oh, I do apologize, your Holiness, it has just occurred to me that my arguments are 'secondary fixations'. Moreover, just now I forgot, pardon me, your Holiness, that you must have so far judged my arguments to be 'contaminative' to the class, unable to 'save' it.

"We also agree that publishing extracts is not satisfactory, and would encourage much obliged for the encouragement, in the absence of God's care & love, we 'isolated individuals' are totally helpless/ you to publish the text yourself in any case. We will inform you about how we intend to deal with this in our press.

The debate on all our differences will continue..."

16. The ICC will first have to answer the points I have raised here and in the above texts, of which the text on organization and the text on the state are most fundamental, because the latter concerns a topic that is already or will soon become programmatic, while the former concerns the exercise of the programmatic leadership of revolutionaries. Otherwise, I won't make a fool of myself anymore by starting new discussions.

"..so we continue also to send you our fraternal greetings.

CDW for the ICC"

My reply to the ICC of 15.8.84 is as follows: "Your letter will be replied to publically. After years of discussion with you, among other groups, I do have a perfect sense of my own importance. Apparently, you are the ones who don't to have written a letter which befits the ranting of a juvenile throwing himself into rage from shame."

## class consciousness & the party's role

The following correspondence took place between I and the CBG late last year and this year, on the questions of class consciousness and the role of the party. Part of it was published in the Communist Bulletin no. 6, namely, my first letter and the CBG's reply. It will be noted that the subsequent letters and the newly added footnotes mark a very substantial development of the initial exchange. - LLM August, 1984

### LLM'S FIRST LETTER TO THE CBG (21.8.83)

We did not discuss...the role of the party. Having spoken to the ICC, the CWO & BC, I find myself agreeing with none of their conceptions. The ICC's has councilist flavours while the latter two's, Bordigist. Much of the debate on the party between the ICC and the CWO seems to me to be on phantom terms, which never get defined. The CWO says consciousness can only come from the party (which is part of the class), the ICC says workers are capable of it themselves. Neither has ever defined what they mean by 'consciousness'. Surely, if we are talking about 'consciousness' as the embodiment of the communist programme (Marx called it scientific communist consciousness if I recall right), then it can only be possessed by revolutionary minorities, ie, the party. Yet, however scientifically conscious (1) the party is, if we do not have at least a significant minority of workers realizing the need for revolution, there won't be a revolution. This realization on the part of the workers themselves, let's call communist consciousness. In decadence, it comes, not accumulatively it must be emphasized, through the slow unfolding of the crisis, during which workers resist and resist (together with sacrifice after sacrifice hoping for the pie tomorrow) but still find things real bad. This either leads to passive demoralization (the crushing --ideological/political, economic and physical--of their struggles also plays its part of course), or to the realization of the bankruptcy of the system. For some workers this realization brings with it the further realization that, by themselves, the workers can replace capitalism by building something new themselves which, by its very nature is, and can only be, associated labour. For the majority, however, the first realization will only bring with it a directionless militancy against the system.

In decadence it is when at least a significant minority of

workers arrive at this communist consciousness (a situation corresponding to the period immediately prior to and the period of dual power itself) that the party plays a truly leading and, towards the later stages, decisive role. Through its intervention, the workers will be given a historical sense or vision, ie, the realization that their struggle has a long history, and has a historic mission (for the less advanced workers, they'll come to realize the way out of the bankrupt system, viz., the communist revolution), given a political lead until (& after) it seizes power. Of course, the levels of communist consciousness vary widely, in some cases even in advance of the party's scientific communist consciousness (eg, the Paris Commune), or attaining this programmatic level (eg, workers nationalized industries in 1918 before the Bolsheviks thought of doing so). Schematic though the above sketch is, I think it's vitally important for the understanding of the role of the party.

I say the ICC's conception has councilist flavours which, of course, is not to say that they are councilists. Let me explain. Some years back, in debating with the CWO, they were of the queer notion that party members 'campaign' in the workers' councils as individual militants and not on the party's programme. They've now quietly dropped this openly councilist idea, but their vocabulary is still full of ambiguous terms:

- . The role of the party is to 'fertilize' the class struggle. BC told me that the old Damen once said in one of the international conferences that the party is not the penis. Damen's polemic was misplaced though. If by 'fertilize' is meant the party is the penis, then the figure is OK because that means that without the party the class struggle will not be able to produce the revolution. But if by 'fertilize' is meant to richen the class struggle (much as fertilizers richen the soil), then it means the same as 'accelerating' the class struggle, another favourite ICC term to which I now turn.
- . 'Accelerate': if something 'accelerates' another then it can only 'accelerate' the latter which is going on anyway. In the case of the party's role being to 'accelerate' the revolutionary tendencies of the working class itself, it means the party is not indispensable.
- . The party is a 'secretion' of the class: as if the formation of the party is something involuntary & the party is some waste!

If the party provides the class with political leadership, which the ICC affirms some other times, why don't they keep it simple and stay away from such stupid terms? Is there a deeper reason? Their pamphlet Communist Organizat-

ions & Class Consciousness suggests there is. This most confused work, which mixes up good, valid observations with ideological borrowings from the New Left is most 'apocalyptic' in its equation of all theoretical mediation with ideology. (It even denies that theory and generally consciousness, class consciousness in either of the above 2 senses, or both, requires mediation, a concept - versus the immediatist, empiricist, experiential view of consciousness and knowledge - which Marx took over from Hegel. See particularly pp. 73-76 where it refutes BC's attempt to distinguish between scientific communist consciousness and communist consciousness.) (2) If I were to judge by this pamphlet alone I would say the ICC is councilist, though because of its confusedness, it contains a strand of argument in it which contradicts the councilist strand.(3)

What about the CWO's? I disagree with their "the party takes power through the councils" formulation. Firstly, as council delegates, party members are answerable to the councils, not the party. Secondly, revoked delegates belonging to the party will be replaced by re-delegation by the councils, not the party. Thirdly, other than the party, there will, I envisage, be a few other communist currents wielding influence in the workers. At certain junctures, these currents may have a clearer and more correct communist view of the junctures than the party (as it happened during the last revolutionary wave), thereby wielding more support in the councils which, at time of delegation, may therefore give them a majority in the council organs. This does not, as the CWO says, mean that the revolution is jeopardised. Moreover, if we view party discipline as above all discipline of the communist program, we can envisage party members delegated to state/council organs being on occasions convinced by the correctness of the views of delegates from these other communist currents and voting for their views, instead of the party's 'majority's' (in quotes, because I do not envisage the party taking an organization position on questions of analyses).(4)

A second disagreement with the CWO's conception is their refusal to recognize, a. the dangers of substitutionism as a cause and not only a consequence of degeneration, and b. that, to a considerable extent it did happen in 1917. (5) In my discussions with two comrades of the CWO in London they both admitted a. and b. but I'm not sure that the CWO as a whole, given their polarization from the ICC, would in fact change their position. Another CWO comrade also got caught out by me once when he said one of the party's responsibilities would be to emphasize to the workers their vigilance/control of their delegates,



which, of course, is to admit the dangers of substitutionism in both the party and the workers.

A third disagreement with the CWO's conception is their term the 'organizing' role of the party. The term means the party is a centre gathering information from around it on the class struggle, runs through the input on the party's computer (programme) and the output becomes directives issued to various parts of the proletariat for implementation. As I said earlier, historically, the workers have proven themselves to be capable of very high levels of consciousness without the party (Paris Commune, 1905, 1918). I can envisage cases where the party will be so embedded in the working class itself - through its members as workers represented on strike committees etc, through party members invited to sit on meetings of strike committees etc, and non-worker party members co-opted onto their executives - that the party's political leadership is 'complete'. But since revolutionaries are part of the class, it is still the class organizing itself and not the party organizing the class a la a convention organizer in relation to whom the participants need only be informed to attend. That the party's leadership itself is clarified (& fed on generally) by the workers' communist consciousness, and not by itself alone, is amply testified by, to name just one example, Lenin's April Theses. I can also envisage cases where the insurrection breaks out even in the absence of the party (cf. the early days in Poland - the party's subsequent presence is, of course, indispensable if the revolution is to proceed). Let it be added that not only the insurrection could occur without the party, even the seizure of power could, for example, Paris Commune, though the Commune was a very special case - LLM, Aug 1984/7). The term 'organizing' therefore both has substitutionist connotations & ignores the communist consciousness of the workers themselves. (6)

The CWO accuses the ICC as a mere bunch of propagandists. At first I thought they meant the ICC sees the role of the party remaining on general, abstract, sloganistic levels, instead of seeing the party's political leadership becoming increasingly concrete as the struggle intensifies (example, making tactical proposals in strikes such as proposing the election of flying pickets, proposing the election of flying pickets, proposing which industry/factory they go to have a greater impact or, during the transitional period, proposing how to make use of engineers hostile to the revolution in socialized production /the transitional period programme generally - LLM, Aug 1984/7, etc) When I told the CWO that the ICC comrades whom I had

spoken to on the topic all agreed on an increasingly concrete political leadership for the party as the struggle intensifies, they didn't believe it, saying that if I had spoken to more ICCers my conclusions would have been different. However, after speaking to BC, I understood why it regards the ICC as councilist and how little in fact the CWO (at least some of its members) understood what BC meant.

If I got BC right, it regards the ICC as councilist, not because it refuses to see an increasingly concrete political leadership as the struggle intensifies, but for its refusal to work inside the working class. More specifically, its refusal to try to solve the problem of the necessity of communists to work where workers are given the impossibility of taking over the existing unions or building new ones. I think this is a valid criticism: as you say, the present isolation of revolutionaries from the class is a real problem requiring solution. The ICC's solution/answer is: our day will come when the class picks up the struggle. In a sense that is true. But again the 'waiting' attitude is obvious. Moreover, if we want to live up to our tasks when our day comes, we need to literally train ourselves in struggling shoulder to shoulder in the middle of the workers. This was never a question for the revolutionaries of the past, the necessity of working inside the proletariat was taken without question. Additionally, the necessity of having party members inside the working class was also accepted without question. It's not a question of these members being a 'transmission belt' of the party's orders to the workers (though substitutionist tendencies undeniably existed) but a. this is the most effective and natural way of the party exercising political leadership, and b. the training school of struggle with and inside the class (more precisely, that part of the class other than the party) is indispensable.

BC's solution is the factory group concept. The ICC seems to have misunderstood this idea completely. Factory groups are not unitary workers' organizations. They are groups of workers forming on a programmatic basis. What happens is BC requires its members to agitate at their workplace, unless this endangers their jobs, and try to group around them workers (not necessarily industrial workers, but depending on the jobs of the party members) having political orientation and are, at least, anti-union. Factory groups do not follow orders of the party. They engage in day to day battle with the unions, trying to reveal to other workers the anti-working class nature of them. Factory groups are oriented towards the party in the sense that through discussion, support from the party, their members will

eventually become party members. The party, of course, will call for the formation of factory groups at factories where they do not have members.

This idea is nothing new but the same one practised by revolutionaries in the past (eg, Lenin's call for the formation of workers' groups, circles, etc associated with the party). To put it more mundanely in today's language, it is an attempt to establish a more systematic network of an organization's contacts who are asked to agitate in their work places. BC has no illusions about them in terms of growth and development: in decadence (though I must warn you that BC's conception of decadence is rather primitive, viz the pure Leninist view of imperialism), they won't grow in size or numbers accumulatively but will appear & disappear. They'll also attract sundry leftists trying to take them over, but this is only a practical problem. The ICC accuses the CWO's Factory Group Platform as a watered down platform. It is not in the sense of compromising on class lines. We all have the experience that workers (& contacts generally) are not attracted to communist politics on a broad, programme-wide level, but on one or two specific class lines, eg workers fed up with the unions' betrayal, seeing through the veil of war hysteria, etc. The Factory Group Platform, therefore, concentrates on a few class (programmatic) issues which are most likely to attract militant, politically oriented workers. I don't see anything wrong with that. BC criticizes the CWO's Factory Group Platform as too elaborate & formalistic (which to some extent is true). The important thing, BC says, is not to write elaborate platforms, but to work to build factory groups around a few programmatic points, the most important of which is anti-unionism.

An ICC comrade once wrote in WR & repeated twice to me that it's crazy trying to organize factory groups: isn't organizing the party itself trouble/problems enough? This is a stupid remark; if factory groups are necessary, organizational problems are a technical, minor detail. The important thing is that factory groups do not follow party orders (7), though through the latter's members & their contact with the party, the latter will exert influence on them. And what's wrong with that?

I do not agree with some of the tactics BC's factory groups use. Also I think the political climate of Italian workers is much more favourable to their formation than, say, the UK. (That's why the CWO has not had one factory group so far, though BC itself only has two at the moment if I remember right.) But the conception, which, as I said, is no new invention of BC, is a worthwhile attempt to solve the dilemma: necessity to work in the proletariat versus impossibility of permanent, unitary workers' organizations. As I said, the ICC simply chooses to ignore the dilemma. (8)

One other point on the party. In places where there is no closed shop, and if by becoming a union member (ie just pay the dues), a communist will be able to attend occasional mass assemblies of workers organized by unions under pressure & intervene there (ie if he doesn't have a union card, though being a worker, he'll be forbidden to attend the assemblies), do you have any objections to party members paying dues to get the card (note, not participate in its everyday activities like helping to collect dues, going to sundry union meetings, etc)?

#### Notes:

1. As is seen elsewhere (see my analysis of the ICC's idealism under "Theoretical Degeneration" in "Critique of the ICC" in this issue - most of the following footnotes assume the reader to be acquainted with this analysis), the ICC rejects that Marxism is scientific.--All footnotes are newly added unless otherwise stated.

2. I must admit that my first reading of the ICC's pamphlet was very casual. It was a rereading of the text "Class Consciousness & the Role of Revolutionaries" in IR 7 on the CBG's prompting (see their reply to my letter) that led me to the realization that the ICC's view of class consciousness might be premised upon idealism (see my letter of 23.1.84 to the CBG, infra). WR 70 (which made me reread the relevant passages in the ICC's pamphlet) swept away any remaining doubt I still had. The ICC's rejection of the term 'mediation' is based upon its idealistepistemology. 'Mediation', premised as it does on the duality of mind & matter, is, according to the ICC, ideological, because it says its premise is ideological. It is basically upon its idealistepistemology, &, secondarily, as we've seen elsewhere, upon its half-baked understanding of the theoretical structure (premise, object, method, etc) of Marxist theory itself, that the ICC bases its rejection of the distinction between scientific communist consciousness & communist consciousness.

3. The basis of this subterranean councilist strand, it is now clear, is none other than the ICC's idealism.

4. Indeed, in the case where unanimity does not exist in the party on a certain question of analysis (for eg, the speed with which the labour time certificate system should be introduced to small scale enterprises of non-essential industries), party members holding different views will fight for the council-state's adoption of their views, instead of all members putting forward the 'majority's'. Cf. the Russian left-communists. For details, see the "Forward" of the text "The Monolithism of the ICC" in "Critique of the ICC" in this issue. It may be asked

what's the point of fighting for one's view in the party then. There are indeed a lot of reasons why this should be done. Firstly, to convince more party members of the correctness of one's view so that it (the view) can be more thoroughly developed by the advanced guards of the class. Secondly, to achieve a 'majority' in the party means to obtain more organizational support from the party for the promotion and development of one's view: for eg, more members holding one's view get delegated to the responsible organs who wield tremendous influence over the party's direction. Etc.

5. In a letter of 5.7.84 to the CBG, I made the following clarification concerning the conception of substitutionism:

"The rejection of the 'substitutionist' view of the party & of the central state organs such as the Sovnarkom, VTsIK in the Russian Revolution. This point, however, must be rigorously analysed & developed. In the hands of the ICC, it's become as nebulous as mist. Because they have never succeeded to concretely analyse how the Paris Commune principle of revocable delegation was destroyed in the Russian Revolution, through its replacement by the genuine delegates in the central soviet organs appointing people to lower soviet organs and enterprises who were invested, using Lenin's terms, 'dictatorial powers', thereby totally usurping the power of the genuine delegates in these lower organs. The dictatorship of the proletariat's destruction began in March 1918 (if not earlier - ...)

/In fact, it did begin right from the morrow of October. As said elsewhere in this issue, from the very beginning, the state in 1917 was, to a very large extent a miscarriage of the commune-state. The people's commissars were genuine delegates, but the state organs headed by them were entirely appointed machineries. Let me give an example. For the sake of simplicity, let's say production is centralized on a territorial basis, instead of on an industrial basis. In 1917, production was administered (from planning to implementation) by Vesenkha acting through the appointed glavkis & their appointed local branches, and not by the ECs of the soviets at the various local levels. The job of Vesenkha was of course to draw up the national plans, but the implementation of these plans at all local levels must, according to the Paris Commune principle, be carried out by the relevant committees in the local soviet ECs. These committees, moreover, should be responsible for the administration (from planning to implementation) of production matters pertaining only to their area of jurisdiction, ie, those of a purely local nature. I'm not saying appointed advisers (bourgeois experts, party members versed in the relevant matters, etc generally) are not necessary. But all state functionaries holding



actual power must, according to the Paris Commune principle, be genuine delegates at the appropriate levels of the soviet system. Local implementation of Vesenkha's plans must be carried out by the responsible genuine delegates at the corresponding levels and not by appointed functionaries. Essentially the same things occurred in all other state organs in 1917, making the state machinery, except at the top, namely, the Sovnarkom, VTsIK & the ARC of Soviets, totally divorced from the soviet system & usurping the latter - LLM, Aug, 1984<sup>7</sup>, and not with one-man management, which was only a further development of a process begun earlier. The party can only substitute itself for the class through the state. /For example, the RCP, holding majorities in the Sovnarkom & VTsIK, totally controlled the appointed state machinery through which it usurped the entire soviet system<sup>7</sup>--There can be no question of the party substituting itself for the class before the seizure of power because, in such a case, there would not have been a real revolution in the first place."

6. The above critique of the CWO's conception is a little fragmentary. It is necessary to criticize it together with the CWO's form & content play of words concerning the dictatorship of the proletariat, in the context of its (the old CWO) ideological analysis of the degeneration of the Russian Revolution (we have, as yet, to learn about the New Series CWO's analysis). (To give just one example to show why it is ideological, in a letter to the CBG of 25.5.84, I wrote: "War Communism never made any attack on the law of value. To use the so-called 'naturalization' of the state sector, the 'abolition' of money in the state sector /it never was abolished, how can money, the ultimate form of value, be abolished without first abolishing value itself? - LLM Aug, 1984<sup>7</sup>, the rations /a superstructural element of distribution - LLM Aug, 1984<sup>7</sup> etc to 'prove' War Communism's 'socialist' character, as the CWO used to do, is based upon a total incomprehension of value & an inversion of the methodology of Marxist political economy.") This has been done in the Chinese text "Russia: Revolution & Counter-Revolution (1917-1921)". A translation of this text is planned.

7. This is an original footnote. Workers' circles, etc were, of course, later turned into means through which the Stalinist parties control all levels of the population - the formation of party fractions in all social groupings. It is to be emphasized that factory groups are only a means of communist work in the proletariat.

8. The question can be raised that if factory groups are only a systematic network of contacts of an organization, why form them into groups with separate activities? This I think is a more interesting question. What do you see

as the possible alternatives of organizing a systematic network of worker contacts in factories? (This is an original footnote.)

Fraternally, LLM

### THE CBG'S REPLY

#### Class Consciousness & the Role of the Party:

To a very large extent we share your criticisms of the CWO's conceptions. As far as it is possible to tell at the moment, it would seem that they have failed to transcend Lenin's position of 1903 and have remained heir to all the inadequacies which the Bolsheviks themselves managed to transcend in their practice at vital moments of the class struggle. This statement is too sweeping to be acceptable in this form - LLM, Aug, 1984 We think your metaphor of a computer, absorbing the input of the class struggle, processing it through the program and regurgitating directives is a very apt one & catches the very mechanical flavour of the CWO's conceptions. It's a vision which sees the Party as the head, the brain of the class, the embodiment of the class's consciousness with the class itself cast in the role of the largely unthinking body which will only achieve its goals by following the orders of its thinking element. We think that it's a fundamentally undialectical understanding which necessarily underestimates the capacity of the class's consciousness and its ability for self-organization whilst, at the same time, overestimating the role & abilities of the Party.

It's a view which reduces class consciousness to something akin to a mental, almost abstract process which can be crystallized simply into a theoretical programme by the reflections of revolutionaries. It's a view which sees only the parts & not the totality. We don't think that class consciousness can be reduced to, or simply equated with, the political clarity defended by revolutionaries (which you call scientific communist consciousness). The political clarity of revolutionaries must be seen, not as the embodiment of the class's consciousness, but simply as part of it, albeit a part which is active & indispensable. Class consciousness can't be understood in terms of what is going on inside the heads of individual workers but in terms of the entire process within which the class collectively acts to defend its interests within capitalism, and through its actions comes to understand itself, the world within which it exists and the tasks confronting it. Of course there are differing and heterogeneous levels of understanding within this process at any given moment in time, but the tendency is towards

a striving to transcend the lessons coming from the day to day struggles of the class & to locate its immediate experience within its historical experiences.

[It will be seen that in my reply I said I agreed generally with the above formulation. But, since WR 70, I think it is necessary to make this clarification: the above formulation seems to suggest that the CBG were not entirely aware of the ICC's idealism & its incomprehension of the theoretical structure of Marxist theory. This becomes clear in the following when the CBG suggested that I read the text in IR 7 & my reply after rereading it. - LLM, Aug, 1984.]

It is in this fashion that the proletariat produces its political fractions - as the ICC says 'secretes' them. We agree with you that it's an unattractive term, but the sense behind it, that revolutionary fractions are a product of the class, a part of the class's actual historical activity is quite correct. The emergence of revolutionary fractions and the creation of the Party can thus be seen as one of the most vital expressions of the process whereby the class comes to consciousness through its struggles.

However, it's true that used badly & out of context, the term 'secrete' might imply an involuntary quality, but we think that if it's situated within the entire framework of the ICC's analysis, then it's clear that there is nothing 'automatic' about the appearance of the Party & revolutionary fractions. They have to be consciously built. (We would refer you to the excellent article in IR 7, for eg). In this sense we agree that by intervening in the activities of the class, by using their political clarity to disseminate throughout the class the historical dimension of their struggle, revolutionaries are precisely an active factor in the 'acceleration' of this process. Revolutionaries are a product and a part of the historical experience of the class and they react back on the class & by doing so, act to generalize and speed up the emergence of the political organization of the class. The essential point here is that this is seen as a process taking place within the class and has nothing to do with Lenin's vision of injecting consciousness from without.

However, like the term 'secrete', the term 'accelerate' if used badly can be extremely ambiguous. It can be taken to mean that the revolutionary process, the destruction of capitalism and the construction of communism is something which the proletariat undertakes automatically & if revolutionaries happen to emerge, then they will speed up the process. Even within the ICC we were critical of the often loose use of the term. We think it is essential

to state not only that revolutionaries are indispensable to this process but why they are. No matter how militant the class are, no matter how thorough-going and advanced their momentary gains might be at high points in the struggle (& we agree with you that these can be momentarily in advance of their political fractions) only the historical overview and programmatic clarity held by revolutionaries can transcend these momentary gains & incorporate them into a clear vision of the way ahead. This overall historical vision is unique to the Party & is the basis for the political leadership which revolutionaries try to exercise. We agree with you also that the CWO's failure to understand this leads them into extremely questionable terrain when they turn to the role of the Party after the seizure of power. The formulation that the Party takes & exercises power, however much 'dialectical' gilding is added, is inextricably tied in with notions of substitutionism, which, as you point out, remains an enigma for the CWO.

However, we must point out that our criticisms of the CWO's conceptions of class consciousness & the role of the party are made with considerable reservations. First of all we are conscious of the fact that under the influence of BC they are still engaged in a process of evolution which is clearly not yet finished. The end result is not yet clear but we understand they are in the process of producing developed texts on the subject so we might see further clarification in the near future. /The first fruit of this process is the text in RP 21 representing the pure "What Is To Be Done" view - LLM, Aug 1984/. Secondly, given our total isolation from the class, the whole discussion remains very largely abstract. It's not always possible in this situation to know precisely what comrades mean simply by what they say. Nor is it possible to have any certainty that today's apparently fixed positions will survive the turmoil to come. We have only to look at the milieu of less than a decade ago to see how fleeting were the positions which were then considered to be the dividing lines between the different tendencies - the question of 1921, the state in the period of transition, the question of trade in the period of transition, etc.

Similarly our identification with the analysis of the ICC is made with considerable reservations. On the one hand we think the work they have done on this question, and the general theoretical framework they have developed is qualitatively more advanced & dialectical than any other contribution we have seen. /I trust the CBG do not hold this view anymore: see later - LLM, Aug 1984/. (It's worth stating that your own formulations, as far as they go, are quite compatible with our understanding of the ICC's

position.) /As said, the CBG wrote this letter when they did not seem to be entirely aware of the ICC's idealism. For my part, I emphatically reject that my conception of class consciousness & the party's role have any resemblance to the ICC's, based as they are, methodologically on idealism and, in practice, on a. taking theoretical work as only so much decorative adjunct, & b. monolithism. - LLM, Aug 1984/ But, at the same time, like the CWO's contributions, their analysis has been forced to remain very largely on the abstract, which makes it very hard to tell whether their hesitations & occasional stumblings (like their one-time contention that members campaign as individual militants inside the soviets, or their clear failure to understand the consciousness of the bourgeoisie) are simply the product of the difficult process of trying to apprehend reality or are the results of the co-existence of conflicting theories which will be increasingly revealed as their interventionary work becomes more developed. We think it's important not to jump to conclusions on the basis of isolated statements or single texts, but to look at the totality of their theoretical and interventionary work, and understand it, not as finished dogmas, but as a starting point which will be transcended as the class struggle & our role within it develops.

#### Intervention:

The question of revolutionary intervention is perhaps the clearest example of your correct contention that the debate on the Party has an unfortunate tendency to fixate on phantoms. The CWO have set up a straw man to the effect that the ICC's 'deficiencies' on the Party have led them to reject a leadership role in favour of cheering on the class from the sidelines by means of abstract propaganda. This has become such an article of faith for the CWO that they either ignore the evidence to the contrary or simply refuse to believe it. The fact is, that throughout the ICC's existence, its leaflets and interventions have continuously contained 'concrete' demands - they have called for strikes, the election of strike committees, the formation & tactical use of pickets, the generalization of struggles including concrete proposals for this, ie naming specific factories to approach etc. They have called for the rejection of union proposals, for the taking over of union mass meetings by physically taking over the stage & microphone & ejecting the union officials. All this is either ignored by the CWO or considered to be abstract. Our own most recent leaflet, for eg, on the strike at a construction yard at Nigg in Scotland, was greeted by the CWO supporters as evidence that we are moving away from the practice of the ICC & towards the CWO because it contained concrete demands. Our contention that it was identical to many leaflets we had already written inside the



ICC was met with blank incomprehension.

However, while you are correct that the ICC accept the need for an increasingly concrete political leadership as the struggle intensifies, isolation has meant that they have hardly begun to define what this will mean in the future when revolutionaries are a living part of strikes, etc. Obviously the general approach has been laid down, but a more detailed discussion has hardly been broached in the ICC. The very limited attempts to do this following the Rotterdam dock strikes were not always useful, serving to muddy the waters rather than clear them. Since then the debate seems to have stagnated inside the ICC.

For us, however, what is important isn't the search for detailed 'recipes' for intervention, but an understanding that our role can only be carried out effectively from within the class's own activity. However clear we are, however clever our tactics, we can't impose coherence & direction on a movement which does not already exist. We can't create the momentum or the concerns, we can only point the way forward & fight against the cul-de-sacs from within it. In this sense, revolutionary intervention can't simply be derived only from revolutionary clarity, but also depends on the class's own activity. This demands a sensitivity to what the class are actually doing, & the ability to judge what the content of each intervention should be. It is the interventions which ignore that, however formally correct they might be in themselves, that are condemned to 'abstraction'. Thus the demand to build soviets, for eg, although politically correct, is simply an abstract demand when made outside of a situation when they are practically on the agenda. Similarly, on another level, the demand for a flat rate £15 increase imposed upon a struggle concerned with something else, is an abstract demand. (....)

We think this is the starting point for responding to the CWO's hot air about 'concrete' demands. Their conception of consciousness tends to reduce the problem of intervention to the simple question of finding a 'recipe' for getting the class to accept the CWO's clarity. For them it depends on the cleverness of their tactics. It leaves them blinkered to the real movement of the class, & on the odd occasion when they have tried to separate their interventions from those of the ICC in a 'concrete' manner, it has led to some spectacularly bad interventions - their demands for work-sharing, their vacillations over Poland, their call for workplace resolutions during the Falklands war, etc.

Factory Groups:

The clearest example of this is the CWO's fixation on factory groups, which, to a large extent, is frequently the only part of their intervention which distinguishes them from the ICC & seems to be tagged on ritualistically to each & every intervention. The CWO argue two things here: one, that factory groups are a mechanism which springs logically from their conceptions of organizing the class, & two, they are a 'recipe' for overcoming our isolation from the class. We have already outlined our approach to the first proposition & will not pursue it at length here except to add that we agree there is a very real debate still to be had on what the practical implications are about the differences between the 'political leadership' concept & the 'organizing the class' approach. In this sense, the creation & use of factory groups at a time when we are a living & influential part of the class struggle, is still very much an open question. However, we think you are wrong when you argue that the BC conception is not a new one. To the best of our knowledge, their position is a unique one in revolutionary history & we cannot think there is any comparison with Lenin's position. He was calling for workers' groups & circles at the height of the 1905 revolution when they were appearing in their thousands quite independently of his call for them. What he was doing was responding to something the class were already doing and, most importantly, he called for their incorporation into the party. He fought for them to become party cells with their members holding full membership in the Party. This has nothing whatsoever to do with either the CWO's approach or BC's.

In the period of decadence, the unitary organs of the class cannot exist outside the moments of struggle. The only class organs which can exist on a permanent basis are the political fractions which derive their ability to survive purely & simply on the basis of their political clarity. We think this clarity is a totality & cannot simply be reduced to 'one or two specific class lines' which might be animating sections of the class at any given moment. Clarity on unions or on this or that aspect of reformism, allied to a desire to fight & act, simply is not sufficient to provide for political survival, with or without the 'protection' of the party outside fending off the attacks of prowling leftists. Their survival is not a practical problem as you say, but a political one & depends on their programmatic foundations. And, as we have said, such foundations are only to be found in the totality of the clarity defended by political fractions. When these groups & circles emerge within the working class, our task is to deepen their partial clarity in order to incorporate them into the organization.

Turning to the question of Factory Groups as a recipe for overcoming our isolation from the class, it is clear that we all, to a greater or lesser extent, start from the same concerns. We all want to 'work where the workers are', to take up our tasks inside the class & take our vital part in the 'training school struggle'. However, we do not think that can be achieved simply by calling for it. As we have said in past issues of the Bulletin, we might as well call for thousand-member sections in major cities. It would certainly increase our influence & bridge our isolation, but it is only a fantasy. It does not matter how often we say it, or stick it in our interventions, it will not change the reality we are faced with. We do not think there are any mechanisms or strategies available to revolutionaries which can change that reality. This search for magical solutions is an expression of despair & can only be a barrier to a realistic assessment of how to go about our tasks in a sane & balanced fashion. In this context, we think that it is unfortunate that no-one in the milieu has responded to our analysis of the uniqueness of our current tininess & isolation. Unless that is faced up to openly, the door is wide open to the despair which produces the flight into localism & councilism on the one hand, and the voluntarism of substitutionism on the other.

The search for tactical recipes for overcoming our isolation is not without the dangers of opportunism & the political degeneration which follows. BC's stated desire to 'be where the class is' for eg, has to be examined very closely. If they mean that we have to strive to physically be where the workers are - on the shopfloor, in assemblies, picket lines, mass meetings, etc - then, of course, we agree with them. (& here we can answer your question about union membership. We have no objection to a communist joining a union to safeguard his job or to gain entry to mass meetings, etc. The KAPD slogan of 'Leave the unions' is politically correct but is to be understood as part of the collective action of the class & not simply as a dogma to be applied to individuals at every point in time.) But from our very limited knowledge of BC, we suspect it means that they are calling for revolutionaries to be where the class are politically, that is to become part of the union structure. We refer you to the text by BC, "The Italian Left, the German Left & the Comintern" where they state: "Lenin aimed to drive home the communists' role inside the unions which was that, we repeat, of pushing forward the contradiction between capital & labour-power, of training proletarians in the most arduous struggles & fights, of conquering the unions' organs or - and this should be pointed out - the workers within those organs, for communism." Admittedly, the copy of the text we have is an edited version and is a poor translation, but the argument seems clear enough & is echoed by their position

about being inside the Partisans in the last war. [BC & the New Series CWO do, in fact, wielding an idealist method, defend 100% the CI's tactics on unionism in the 20's, at least up to 1927. The BC text cited by the CBG actually says that conquering the unions then "was possible". In the 40's, the PCInt also called for working politically inside the unions, though, BC tells me, that position was imposed on the party by the supporters of Bordiga & renounced by the anti-Bordigists in the 50's. - LLM, Aug 1984]

To turn to our position on work in the class, we think one of your footnotes sums it up well. You state: [refer to note 8 of my letter - LLM]. We do not think there is any alternative to organizing such a network of contacts. That aim must always be a major element in the interventions of revolutionaries. We intervene not only to influence the struggle but also to win militants to the organization. We want to have, and expect to have, members in the workplace where they would operate as a cell and attempt to create a milieu of sympathisers around them. Even where we have no members, we would fight to act as a focal point, a leadership, for those politicized elements of the class who were attempting to organize themselves. We want to do this now, that is one of the major reasons we hand out leaflets & why we always put our address on them. That is why we plan to hold public meetings & why we would discuss with pickets, etc. But we do not think any of this can be achieved simply by calling for it, nor by expending a lot of hot air on non-existent factory groups. If we were in a situation where workers were actually responding to the call for factory groups, surely we would also be in a situation where we could build a network of cells & sympathizers. & in that situation, of course, the debate is about how to exercise political leadership & not about how to overcome our isolation.

One last point on this subject. We should make it clear that the position we've been defending here is not a programmatic plank of the CBG, but is simply a majority position on what is for us a question which is still open & still under discussion. For obvious historical reasons, our analysis is basically that of the ICC, except that we have rejected the rigidity of having it incorporated in our programmatic identity. As a footnote here, much of our critique of the ICC's monolithism & readiness to leap into premature positions is demonstrated by the way that the ICC came to a position on factory groups. It was almost literally conjured out of the air by the central organs in response to the CWO. The discussion in the ICC began & ended with the public statement of the "ICC position".

.... we think you're wrong (& inconsistent) to argue that

monolithism is non-programmatic & not a basis for splitting.... the question of the Party. Even if we had an identical position to the ICC on this, the fact that we locate it within an entirely different organizational practice demands our independent political existence. In reality, as we've argued earlier in the letter, it's not at all clear that we do, even formally, share the ICC's position on the Party, although our general approach is obviously similar (as is your own in many respects [see my earlier comment - LLM, Aug 1984]). But the important point is that clarity on the Party's role in the class is inseparable from an understanding of organizational practice, and in this sense we are quite clearly arguing a different position from the ICC....

Cormack for the CBG

### LLM'S LETTER OF 23.1.84

Class consciousness & the role of the party:

Firstly, I agree with you (...) that class consciousness in its entirety cannot be equated with what I called last time scientific communist consciousness alone, but embraces the workers' communist consciousness as well. In other words, as you put it well, class consciousness must be understood "in terms of the entire process within which the class collectively acts to defend its interests within capitalism, and through its actions comes to understand itself, the world within which it exists & the tasks confronting it." [Refer to the comment I added to the CBG's letter earlier - LLM, Aug 1984.] Thus understood, class consciousness is extremely heterogeneous, ranging from scientific communist consciousness to the lowest economist level. At the same time, viewing revolutionary minorities as part of the class, class consciousness does arise in the process of the class coming to consciousness itself. [ditto - LLM, Aug 1984] As to the indispensability of the communist programme, ie, of the party, I agree with the way you put it in the 5th paragraph under the relevant section of your letter...

I've read the IR 7 article & think some clarification is required since you seem to identify with it. It is correct, as the text says, that ideology 'objectifies' the social world into something existing 'independently' of social relations, ie, relations of production. Ideology, thus, professes to study the 'objective', therefore 'eternal' social world from an 'aloof' vantage point. By means of this kind of 'aloof' mediation between the 'objective' [socially] thinking mind & the 'objective' social world, ideology professes to be 'objective'. So far, I'm in absolute



agreement. However, the text then went on to say that because class consciousness is not ideology, with which I agree for totally different reasons, as it is now clear: see the relevant parts in "Critique of the ICC" - LLM, Aug 1984<sup>7</sup>, the proletariat does not require mediation in its coming to consciousness. Here the term 'mediation' is obviously used in the sense of ideology professing to be mediating between the 'objective' /socially/ thinking mind & the 'objective' social world. [This was a misunderstanding on my part: see footnote 2 to my letter of 21.8.83, supra - LLM, Aug 1984<sup>7</sup>. But, as I said last time, 'mediation' has another meaning which opposes the immediatist, empiricist, experiential, ie, spontaneist view of consciousness & knowledge. Thus while even the scientific, programmatic level of class consciousness is not mediation in the sense of the ideological process, it certainly only arises through the vanguard of the class mediating the class struggle in its historical totality & other objects - LLM, Aug 1984<sup>7</sup> (even the communist consciousness of the mass of workers requires mediation, not accumulatively though, of their own struggles). Looseness in the usage of terms [much more than that, as is now clear - LLM, Aug 1984<sup>7</sup>, rife in the ICC, has cost it to 1. brand even the sciences (physics etc) as ideology (because they mediate between an object (the external world) & a subject (the human mind)); and 2. brand BC's attempt to distinguish between scientific communist consciousness & communist consciousness as making class consciousness an ideology... Now, while the social world is not independent of social relations, the natural world outside men certainly is. Dialectical materialism does not do away with the primacy of matter as Lenin puts it so well in Materialism & Empirio-Criticism (...). Engels argues well in Anti-Duhring: for eg, logic, a human creation, derives from the external world (if we say that mediation in the second sense as defined above is ideology, then the numbering system, for eg, must have arisen spontaneously with the appearance of the first human beings, an obviously wrong & absurd conclusion). Similarly, history has its material basis on men's production of their material life. Social ideas (philosophical, ethical, religious, etc.) have their material source in the relations of production. Marx did not do away with the duality of mind and matter (...)] for the materialist<sup>7</sup> the universe existed before men on the one hand, and, on the other, bourgeois ideology derives from the specific position of the bourgeoisie in the relations of production. The duality that Marx did do away with is the duality of ideology, namely, that there is a socially 'objective' thinking mind mediating between itself & an 'objective' social world. (While the external world does exist objectively & independently of men, history (ie, the social world) is made by men, or more specifically, the masses ,ie, men di-

vided into social classes). The conditions for the disappearance of this duality of ideology only exists under communism.../please note how I've defined ideology, a word with as many definitions as one can count - cf. footnote 1 under "Organizational Degeneration" in "Critique of the ICC", supra - LLM, Aug 1984/ It appears to me that the ICC's complete misunderstanding of the bourgeoisie's consciousness may have its roots in this confusion over what Marx did & did not do away with.

Your 'defence' of the word 'accelerate' seems misplaced. You say: "by intervening in the activities of the class.. revolutionaries are precisely an active factor in the 'acceleration' of this process..act to generalize & speed up the emergence of the political organization of the class." That is not what the ICC mean. They mean revolutionaries 'accelerate' the class struggle generally, and not only the emergence of the class party. As I said last time, if revolutionaries only 'accelerate' the class struggle, then they are not indispensable. Thus while the party is only a part of the overall class struggle, and scientific communist consciousness only the most advanced aspect of class consciousness as a whole, the party & its programme do not only 'accelerate' the class struggle. While 'secrete' may only be a stupid term, 'accelerate' and its other side, 'fertilize' are wrong.

Finally, I think it important to specifically mention that political leadership includes both programmatic & tactical leadership (the latter deriving from the former)...

#### Intervention:

On the whole I agree with your view but one point needs clarification, again learning from a negative ICC experience. The need to be sensitive to the class' own activity must not lead us into the following trap: the CWO accuses the ICC as abandoning revolutionary defeatism during the Falklands war because they regarded it as phoney. When..in Belgium, not knowing WR did call on workers to sabotage the war effort, I raised this with 2 ICC members. Erroneously thinking that WR did not call for revolutionary defeatism, they argued: a. "But our perspective is not towards war but revolution"; b. calling for revolutionary defeatism would not evoke any response!...

#### Factory Groups (FGs):

I think you have somewhat mistaken me here. FGs, as I understand the conception, are not unitary organs of the class as you assume. My understanding is that it is no big deal, it is what all revolutionaries already are doing, though they don't write elaborate platforms for & name

the effort - ...cf. your remarks "We don't think there is a ny alternative to organizing such a network of contacts" & "We want to do this now". I agree with your 'political clarity is a totality' view & have incorporated it into my letter to the CWO. The CWO seems to have been over-fantasized by the name & sees it as a panacea, & not the humdrum thing it is....

As to the comparison with Lenin's position, Lenin did call for workers' groups & circles before 1905 (see One Step Forward, 2 Steps Back & A Letter to a Comrade for eg). But still the comparison is not really apt. Because 1. these circles had no criterion of membership & 2. it was in the progressive era of capitalism. A better comparison, as EM also realizes, is with the KAPD's factory organizations.

Regroupment:

... Monolithism is an organizational practice & is not, strictly, programmatic. However, monolithism uncorrected & continued becomes a block to the development & exercise of political leadership of revolutionaries, & therefore, does provide a valid ground for splitting...

Communist Greetings, LLM

In reply to the above letter, the CBG commented: it's a case in which "both sides listen, both sides gain". On reading WR 70, I wrote a further letter of 5.6.84 to the CBG with this comment: "In a previous letter, I said...

Marx did not do away with the duality of mind & matter, but only with the duality of ideology. I also suspected that the ICC are not clear on this difference. My suspicion seems to have been borne out. In WR 70 ... I'd like to hear your comment on the above epistemological question, which, I think, has immense significance."

LLM, August 1984

## OUTLINES OF CHINESE TEXTS IN IC no. 2

### "RUSSIA: REVOLUTION & COUNTER-REVOLUTION (1917-1921)"

This text rejects both the (old) CWO's analysis & the ICC's.

It begins by reaffirming that the Russian Revolution was part & parcel of the revolutionary wave sweeping over Europe towards the end of world war one. It then goes immediately into the section on methodology, the aim of which is to build a theoretical framework for the analysis of the initial phases of the transitional period in general, in order to provide a framework for analysing the Russian Revolution or, for that matter, any proletarian revolution.

The thesis of this section is briefly:

1. The communist revolution begins as a political act by destroying the bourgeois state.
2. The programme of the proletariat must then consist of two fundamental parts: a. politically, it must build a commune-state, solidly based upon the Paris Commune principle of delegation & revocability, from bottom up. This principle applies to all state members holding positions with actual power (the other category of state members will be advisers, for example, bourgeois experts). The dictatorship of the proletariat is defined by this principle. At the same time, this principle has tremendous, nay, vital politico-economic significance: in a non-natural economy, it is the only way in which the producers are not separated from the means of production. b. Economically, the proletariat must immediately expropriate the essential industries & other large enterprises, and socialize the expropriated sectors of production by: i. central planning & ii. introducing the labour time certificate system, both as the basis of production calculation & of distribution. The labour time voucher system is the most fundamental element. It is the only way to eradicate the law of value in a non-natural economy.
3. If 2b. above is not undertaken, the economy will still be based upon the law of value. If the Paris Commune principle is not instituted 100%, the producers will be separated from the means of production & their 'representatives' will become de facto owners of the means of production, and the producers 100% proletarians in the capitalist sense. This means the economic infrastructure

will still be completely capitalist, while the state will be an aborted commune-state.

4. In such a case, whatever the subjective intentions of the proletariat's 'representatives', they become de facto capitalists, and will perforce have to answer the requirements of capital, forcing them to cross the class barricade.

5. An isolated revolution will be able to build socialism independently on two conditions; the first of which being impossible: a. it severs all economic links with the capitalist world; b. its resources are basically self-sufficient. The first condition is impossible because imperialism will not allow any area's natural resources & potential market not to serve capital's accumulation needs.

6. This does not, however, mean that the isolated revolution cannot, before imperialism succeeds to conquer it, immediately start to eradicate the law of value within its own borders by severing all economic links with the capitalist world (providing its resources are basically self-sufficient), & introduce the political & economic programmes outlined above. Not to do so will inevitably mean that the laws of the capitalist infrastructure will in a short period of time force the miscarried commune-state, whatever the subjective intentions of its members, to cross the class line, and, therefore, even when the revolution does break out in another country, the miscarried commune-state's degeneration may have become irreversible.

The texts makes the following points in its analysis of the Russian Revolution:

1. The state in 1917 was from the very begining, to a very large extent, a miscarried commune-state. The state was an appointed (direction of appointment being, of course, from top to bottom) machinery totally divorced from the soviet system, except at the apex (the Sovnarkom, VTsIK & ARC of Soviets). Major landmarks in the destruction of the Paris Commune principle, as the aborted commune-state began to consolidate itself include: the appointment of so-called 'soviet commissars' to the enterprises invested with, to use Lenin's terms, 'dictatorial power' from March, 1918 onwards; the establishment of appointed local branches of the Vesenkha's glavkis; etc. (For a brief expansion of this point, see footnote 5 to LLM's letter of 21.8.83 to the CBG elsewhere in this issue.)

2. War Communism, the period during which 'proto-communist' policies were alleged (by the old CWO, among others) to have been instituted, never made any attack on the law of value. It is as a result of a total incomprehension



of value & an inversion of the method of Marxist political economy that, for eg, the old CWO could use the so-called 'naturalization' of the state sector, the 'abolition' of money in the state-sector, the rations etc to 'prove' War Communism's 'socialist' character. If War Communism never made any attack on value, how was it possible for its phenomenal form money to be abolished in a planned economy? The rations, on the other hand, belong, of course, to the superstructure (distribution).

3. Since the law of value was never touched, since the nationalization of industry took place against a background of the progressive destruction of the Paris Commune principle, thereby ensuring the separation of the producers from the means of production, the nationalizations during War Communism turned the miscarried commune-state into the largest de facto owner of capital during that period.

4. It is useless to say abstractly that October's isolation caused it to degenerate. It, of course, meant that whatever happened inside Russia, the Revolution was destined to be crushed. But, within this parameter, it is necessary to concretely analyse the actual process of the degeneration & the actual role played by October's isolation. To do the latter, it is necessary to pose & answer concretely these questions: 1. Did October's isolation, through, for eg, increasing Russia's economic difficulties, cause the Russian state to abandon a previously correct programme & adopt a capitalist programme? According to the old CWO view, it did, as signified by the transition from War Communism to the NEP. Not to mention its failure to understand the essence of the dictatorship of the proletariat politically & politico-economically, understanding War Communism's real nature tells us that October's isolation had no effect on the erroneous & therefore capitalist programme from 1917 to 1921 & after. 2. According to the ICC, it was the demise of the world revolution after 1921 that caused the revolution to degenerate. To prove this view, it is necessary to ask: did October's isolation after 1921 cause the RCP (the Russian state being, according to the ICC, 'by nature conservative') to abandon the world revolution and the revolution inside Russia in order to rebuild Russian capitalism through establishing capitalist relations with the outside world? We have already seen whether the revolution inside Russia was abandoned only after 1921. (The cause of Russia's reestablishing successfully capitalist relations with the outside world from circa 1921 on is commented on below.) It is, of course, possible to interpret, as the ICC does, the RCP's abandonment of the world revolution as being the result of the latter's demise. But this interpretation is based entirely on the RCP's verbal proclamations on the questions of tactics & its changing theory of the fate of an isolated revolution (see below). If, however, we analyse the demise

of October materialistically, we see that by the time the world revolutionary wave was over (1921), the Russian revolution itself was already completely defeated (see below). This directly means that the RCP's verbal proclamations, in other words, its & the Russian state's foreign policy, after 1921, must be interpreted materialistically, and not on their own criteria. (see below)

5. Based upon the above, the text points out that the only direct effect of October's isolation on its demise was: a. it accelerated the abandonment of the Paris Commune principle, the process of which, it must be emphasized, had begun before the Civil War, and b. it, through the Civil War, killed many of the most conscious workers. (As pointed out earlier, the economic difficulties caused by the Civil War did not have any programmatic effect.)

6. During War Communism, therefore, as the collective owner of capital, the aborted commune-state progressively answered the needs of capital, its members the needs of their position in the social relations of production.

7. Kronstadt & the state of siege in Petrograd represented the definitive end of the Russian Revolution, not as a sudden change in the class nature of the aborted commune-state. It was the sign that the developments taking place during War Communism had been completed, and the state now faced the workers as a newly born bourgeoisie.

8. 1921 was the end, not the beginning, as the ICC says. After the 10th Congress, other than the fact that the RCP and the state still called themselves 'proletarian', what was proletarian about them? The Paris Commune principle had been totally dead for some time already, the state had become during War Communism the collective owner of Russian capital, the state had just taken up fully its new role in the social relations of production during the state of siege in Petrograd & Kronstadt, what trace of proletarian character was there in the RCP & the state? Marx says in the Preface that "one does not judge an individual by what he thinks about himself", the ICC is exactly using what the RCP & the state said about themselves to judge their class character during 1921-1927.

The text then analyses how as the Russian state & the RCP more & more took on their role in the Russian social relations of production, their foreign policy also changed. A critique is also made of the favourite leftist argument that Russia's backwardness was the 'cause' of degeneration.

The text will have a part 2 in the form of an appendix, analysing the degeneration of the RCP itself, which paralleled the degeneration of the Revolution, and the Russian state's policy towards other parties which supported the dictatorship of the proletariat.

An English translation of both texts is planned. Assistance from sympathizers & readers will be most welcome.

### "EASTERN CAPITALISM: A POLITICO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS"

This text begins by briefly saying why, among others, the ICC's 'analysis' (it has, in fact, no analysis at all), & the CWO's analysis have scarcely addressed the problem.

Its analysis itself starts by going right back to the very starting point of Capital: value, exchange-value, & commodities, examining these categories in the light of Marx's critique of John Gray's theory of 'labour money' ( A Contribution... , Grundrisse, etc). Directly related to Marx's critique of Gray is his comments on how production will be organized in a socialist society in the Critique of the Gotha Programme, Capital, passim, etc, as well as Engels' similar comments in Anti-Duhring, & his critique of Kautsky's pseudo-economic category, "value-in-itself". By way of a number of hypothetical numerical examples of a non-natural economy, the necessary relationships mentioned by Marx & Engels, between on the one hand, private property & value, commodities & exchange-value, giving rise to a commodity economy, and on the other hand, between common ownership of the means of production & the organization of production on the basis of direct labour time (Marx's proposal of the labour time certificate system), are proved.

Basing upon the above, it is then proved that, despite the absence of a free market as exists in the West in department 1 (to examine the question in its purest state, the assumption is made of a perfectly centralized & planned 'socialist' economy), the 'socialist' economies are 100% based upon the law of value, ie, 100% commodity economies. Just as Marx's analysis in Capital proceeds from

commodities to capitalism, the analysis of this text proceeds from, this being the only correct way to do so, proving that the 'socialist' economies are commodity economies, to proving them to be capitalist economies.

A concrete analysis of how prices are actually formed in the 'socialist' economies is made in order to prove that they are precisely the money form of value, and disprove the claim by sundry leftists that they are only 'formal' prices.

The next step is to prove that labour-power is a commodity in the 'socialist' economies. Once this is done, it can be proved that a commodity economy (which only exists when labour-power is a commodity) is a capitalist economy. There never has been a commodity economy-in-abstract. This prove is all the more necessary as sundry leftists claim that a. the law of value is not the fundamental law of capitalism, and b. there are 'socialist' commodities. A searching critique is made of the first claim. As to the second, the exposition so far has already disproved it absolutely. (Part 2 of this text will contain critique of specific theories of 'socialist' commodities.)

To prove the capitalist nature of the 'socialist' countries is indispensable to any attempt to define the economic programme of the transitional period, the first step of which is to understand the few indicatory remarks made by Marx & Engels on socialist production, and the meanings of the categories 'direct social labour', 'direct labour time', etc. This is why the text then contains a section entitled "What Is Socialism?" This section, by way of a numerical example, analyses in detail how the labour time certificate system Marx proposed & reiterated by Engels can concretely be implemented. This section goes much further than Mattick's "What Is Communism?" (ICC no. 1, 1934) which remained basically on the level of repeating what Marx said in Critique of the Gotha Programme, though concretizing it a little by a few macro formulae. Mattick did not examine how these formulae could be implemented, which is the crux of the matter: showing at one & the same time how such a system is antithetical to the law of value & how it can actually be realized. An analysis is also made of how complex labour can be calculated under the labour time voucher system (the calculation of unproductive labour is comparatively simple & was considered by Mattick.) The text ends its part 1 with an examination of how & why the presence of an unsocialized peasant sector in the early stages of the transitional period will not affect the labour time voucher system.

